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## ZU CHRISTIAN WEISES MORALLEHRE

HANS WOLFF

Obwohl Christian Weise alles andere als ein wirklich großer Geist ist, so kommt seinen Werken doch aus dem Grunde erhebliche Bedeutung zu, daß sie den Übergang von der höfischen Weltanschauung des Barock zu der bürgerlichen der Aufklärung darstellen. Trotzdem war man sich über die moralischen Ansichten dieses Dichters nur wenig im klaren, bis die Arbeiten von Egon Cohn<sup>1</sup> und Arnold Hirsch<sup>2</sup> scheinbare Widersprüche aufgelöst haben. Die folgenden Seiten wollen versuchen, diese Verdeutlichung etwas weiterzuführen.

Die Schwierigkeit bei der Behandlung von Weises Moralität liegt darin, daß der Dichter uns tatsächlich ganz verschiedene Lehren vorführt, die vom Machiavellismus bis zum stoischen Primitivismus reichen. Der Schlüssel zu diesen Unterschieden liegt darin, daß Weise, in dieser Beziehung ein echter Vertreter des 17. Jahrhunderts, nicht von dem aufklärerisch-idealistischen Gedanken der Identität des Menschen in allen Ständen und allen Lebenslagen ausgeht, sondern ganz bewußt die ständische Gliederung der Gesellschaft in seine ethischen Lehren einbezieht und somit zu verschiedenen Morallehren für verschiedene Stände kommt. Ein Grundsatz ist zwar allen diesen Lehren gemeinsam: Der Mensch will auf Erden glücklich sein; der Weg zu dieser Glückseligkeit muß sich aber nach den Lebensumständen des Einzelnen, und ganz besonders nach seinem Stande richten. Dabei ist es nicht genug eine Scheidung zwischen Hof und Bürgertum vorzunehmen, wie es im Barock üblich ist, denn Weise nimmt eine sehr viel schärfere Nuancierung vor. Die oberste Gruppe ist natürlich die höfische Gesellschaft, d. h. der Landesfürst und seine unmittelbare Umgebung. Die nächste Gruppe läßt sich nicht mit einem der üblichen ständischen Begriffe bezeichnen, doch dürfte sie der Ausdruck *beati possidentes* klar umreißen. Dieser Gruppe gehört sowohl der Adel an, der keine unmittelbare Verbindung mit dem Hofe hat,<sup>3</sup> wie auch das bürgerliche Patriziat, d. h. diejenigen Elemente des Bürgertums, die durch ihren Reichtum der Alltagssorgen enthoben sind und in dieser Beziehung mit dem Adel auf einer Stufe stehen. Die dritte Gruppe ist dann das Bürgertum schlechthin, d. h. die städtische Bevölkerung, die entweder

<sup>1</sup> *Gesellschaftsideale und Gesellschaftsromane, Germ. Studien.* Bd. 13, Berlin 1921.

<sup>2</sup> *Bürgertum und Barock im Deutschen Roman*, Frankfurt 1934.

<sup>3</sup> Der Begriff des Landadels, den Hirsch hier einführt, scheint mir nicht besonders günstig, da es sich um eine geldliche, nicht um eine ständische Gliederung handelt.

wenig oder nicht genug Vermögen hat, um mit dem Adel Schritt halten zu können. Die Bauernschaft bildet die vierte Gruppe, und als fünfte Gruppe kann man hieran noch das gemeine Volk anschließen, d. h. die mehr oder weniger besitzlose städtische Bevölkerung. Betrachten wir die Moral dieser Schichten im einzelnen.

In die höfische Welt gewinnen wir den klarsten Einblick in dem Drama *Masaniello*, doch ist auch die Karrikatur des Hofes in der Rückmersdorffer Bauernrevolte im *Politischen Näscher*<sup>4</sup> lehrreich. Die Welt läßt sich ohne eine gewisse Unmoral nicht lenken, das ist Weises grundlegende Überzeugung, und da es gerade die Aufgabe des Hofes ist, die Welt zu lenken, so kann es hier ohne eine gewisse Unmoral nicht abgehen. Machiavellis Scheidung von *virtù* und *necessità* macht sich Weise völlig zu eigen und sieht es geradezu als Pflicht des Hofmenschen an, zuweilen krumme Wege zu gehen. Weise geht dabei so weit, daß er unser modernes Gefühl erheblich verletzt: Roderigo, Vizekönig von Neapel, ist von den aufständischen Neapolitanern, die sich die harten Zölle nicht mehr gefallen lassen wollen, hart bedrängt. Soll er nachgeben und damit einen gefährlichen Präzedenzfall schaffen, der die Stellung der spanischen Macht und die Vorrechte des Adels aufs schwerste bedroht? Oder soll er sich lieber zur Wehr setzen und gegebenenfalls für die gute Sache untergehen? Keines von beiden ist notwendig, so belehrt uns Weise durch den von allen Parteien verehrten Bischof Philomarini, der unzweifelhaft des Dichters eigene Auffassung wiedergibt und die schließliche Lösung des Stückes herbeiführt:

Nachgeben hat seine Zeit. Vielleicht erleben wir die Zeit, da man sich wieder aufrichten kan. Und etwas im Vertrauen gesagt: Ein Vice-Roy kan leicht im Versprechen freygebig seyn: Denn hat er zu viel gethan, so mag es der König oder Succesor ändern. (*Haller Neudrucke* 216/19, S. 29).

Wäre hier Philomarini als Vertreter eines einseitigen Standesinteresses oder gar eines persönlichen Interesses dargestellt, so wäre eine solche Moral verständlich, wenn auch nicht entschuldbar. Gerade die Tatsache, daß er als weiser, persönlich nicht interessierter Patriarch spricht, der nur den gemeinen Nutzen im Auge hat, läßt uns eine solche Doppelzüngigkeit schwer erträglich erscheinen, sodaß der moderne Leser geneigt ist, daß Drama mißzuverstehen und eher die Sache der Bedrückten als die des Adels zu der seinigen zu machen. Ganz anders ist aber Weises eigne Einstellung, der die Doppelzüngigkeit des Hofes als politische Tugend angesehen wissen will. Gerade diese Philosophie ist es, die wenige Jahrzehnte später zu der Überzeugung von der Verdorbenheit der menschlichen Gesellschaft führt und ein sehnüchtes Verlangen nach einem gesellschaftslosen Stande, dem Naturstande, weckt; Weise denkt noch zu stark höfisch, um die Welt der Regierenden mit bürgerlichen Maßstäben zu messen und zu verwerfen. Immerhin ist auch Weise davon überzeugt,

<sup>4</sup> Ausgabe von 1678. Exemplar der Bibliothek der University of Chicago.

daß die Handlungen der Regierenden stets auf das allgemeine Wohl ausgerichtet sein müssen. Der Verwalter zu Rückmersdorff (*Näscher*, S. 53 ff.), dessen Regierungsweise nicht von dem Gedanken der Wohlfahrt der ihm anvertrauten Bauern, sondern nur von seinem eigenen Größenwahn geleitet wird, ist das Abbild des Regenten, wie er nicht sein soll (S. 72). Wenn wir aber annehmen, daß Weise den geschilderten Vorfall vor allem zur Grundlage einer derartigen Moral macht, so sehen wir uns getäuscht, denn auch hier mischt sich, recht unvermittelt, wieder der Gedanke einer verschlagenen *ratio status* ein:

Die Welt ist schwerlich zu regieren /  
 Man muß klug und gedultig seyn:  
 Die stets ihr Schwert zur Losung führen /  
 Die tölpeln oftmals grausam ein /  
 Hingegen wer den Staat versteht /  
 Läßt manches gehen / wie es geht. (S. 70)

So viel über die Moral der höfischen Gesellschaft, die bei Weise als eine scharf abgegrenzte Gruppe erscheint. Sehr viel weniger scharf abgegrenzt ist die zweite Gruppe, weil sie weniger im ständischen als im geldlichen Sinne erfaßt ist, sodaß die Scheidung zwischen der zweiten und der dritten Gruppe nicht ganz einfach ist. Das entscheidende Merkmal ist die Wohlhabenheit, wie sich aus den Worten des Deutschen am Schluß der *Hauptverderber*<sup>5</sup> ergibt. Der Deutsche bekennt sich dort zu einer bürgerlich-stoischen Moral, die Einfachheit um jeden Preis fordert, gibt aber auf Einwurf des Ich-erzählers zu: „Es hat seinen Ruhm / wenn wohlhabende Leute den Überfluß ihres Einkommens ohn allen Schaden also anwenden“. Der Wohlhabende kann sich vieles leisten, was dem weniger Wohlhabenden versagt bleiben muß: daher die Scheidung zwischen den beiden Gruppen. Daß der Unterschied zwischen Adel und Bürgertum keine bedeutsame Rolle spielt, ist häufig hervorgehoben worden; Florindo, der Held der *Erznarren*,<sup>6</sup> ist von Adel, ohne daß dieser Umstand jedoch eine Rolle spielt, denn sein Gebahren ist durchaus bürgerlich, wenigstens insoweit es von Weise gebilligt wird. Das Schlagwort, das die Moralität dieser Gruppe regiert, heißt „politisch“, ein Begriff, der eine Parallele zu dem Gedanken der Staatsraison in der höfischen Schicht darstellt. Der verantwortliche Staatsbürger soll tugendhaft sein und kann sich nicht, wie der Hofmensch, auf Staatsnotwendigkeiten berufen, aber dies Gebot der Tugend schließt keinesfalls unbedingte Biederkeit, Ehrlichkeit und Offenheit in sich. Der politische Mensch lügt nicht, aber hütet sich andererseits vor übergroßer Aufrichtigkeit; er hört zu und schweigt. Der politische Mensch will sich nicht unehrlich bereichern, aber erkennt doch auch seinen Vorteil und nimmt ihn entschlossen wahr. Weltgewandtheit, Eleganz, Galanterie und ähnliche aus spanischem und französischem Geist erwachsene Ideale tauchen hier auf und selbst der im 18. Jahrhundert so heftig angegriffene Ehrbegriff wird in dieser Sphäre

<sup>5</sup> Ausgabe von 1672. Exemplar der Bibliothek der University of Chicago.

<sup>6</sup> *Haller Neudrucke*, Bd. 12-14.

von Weise durchaus anerkannt (*Näscher*, Weg zur wahren Glückseligkeit, Nr. 55), ja sogar das Duell lehnt Weise nicht rundweg ab (*Erznarren* 2. Kap.). Gerade das ist ja der Sinn von Florindos Jagd nach den nährischsten und nach den klügsten Leuten: er soll sich mit den verschiedenen Arten von Narren bekannt machen, die diese Ideale der feineren Welt entweder nicht kennen oder mißverstehen. Über die soziale Grundlage dieses Gedankens des politischen Wesens braucht an dieser Stelle nichts weiter gesagt zu werden, ein Hinweis auf die Ausführungen von Hirsch (S. 68 ff.) mag genügen.

Die Aneignung politischen Wesens ist aber nicht die einzige Forderung, die Weise an die *beati possidentes* stellt. Der politische Mensch ist der vollkommenste Typ der *beati possidentes*, doch ebenso wichtig wie das Streben nach politischer Vollkommenheit ist die Sorge um die Grundlage dieses ganzen Gebäudes, und diese Grundlage ist das Geld. Unter den Typen, die uns in den *Erznarren* vorgeführt werden, spielt gerade der Typ des einstmals Wohlhabenden eine erhebliche Rolle, der aus eigener Schuld die Grundlage seines Glückes, sein Geld, verscherzt hat. Maßlose Verschwendung, Hang zum Abenteuerum, Reiselust und anderes mehr kann dies zur Folge haben, wie das 6. Kapitel der *Erznarren* dartut, und so warnt Weise ganz besonders vor allem, was diese wichtigste Grundlage irdischen Glückes zerstören kann. Auch der reichste Erbe muß sich stets vergegenwärtigen: seine Vorfahren „strichen die Ducaten Nicht mit fauler Hoffart ein“ (*Näscher* 202). Zwar hat Weise absolut kein Verständnis für den Geiz, denn Geld ist schließlich nur ein Mittel, „dadurch du dein Leben mit höchster *reputation* führen könntest“ (*Erznarren* 63), es darf also nie Herr über seinen Besitzer werden, sondern dieser muß stets Herr des Geldes bleiben, aber alle Ausgaben müssen sich andererseits im Rahmen der Einnahmen halten, sonst bricht die Herrlichkeit zusammen, und dem scheinbaren Glück folgt tiefstes Unglück.<sup>7</sup>

Zeigen diese letzteren Vorstellungen schon gewisse Züge, die eine Verwandtschaft mit Gedanken der bürgerlichen Bewegung des 18. Jahrhunderts verraten, so wird Weise tatsächlich zum Vertreter durch und durch bürgerlichen Ideen, wenn er die Moral des weniger wohlhabenden Bürgertums erörtert, ja seine Ausführungen gehen hier häufig so weit, daß man unwillkürlich an die moralischen Wochenschriften erinnert wird. Dieser Umstand ist auch keineswegs verwunderlich, denn wenn Weise sich, wie in den *Hauptverderben*, an Moscherosch anlehnt,<sup>8</sup> so übernimmt er von diesem denselben Kampf gegen die Mode, den auch das 18. Jahrhundert wieder aufnahm. Während aber Moscherosch von einem humanistisch-nationalen Gesichtspunkte aus gegen die Überfremdung deutschen Wesens zu Felde zieht, rollt Weise das Problem mehr vom sozialen

<sup>7</sup> Wie groß die Bedeutung des Geldes in Weises Weltbild ist, ergibt sich aus einem Gedicht in *Der Grünenden Jugend Nothwendige Gedanken*, Leipzig 1675 (Exemplar im Privatbesitz von Herrn Dr. Kurt von Faber du Faur, Cambridge, Mass.). Weise bezieht sich dort (S. 89) auf die Gegenwart als die Zeit, „da Gold regiert“.

<sup>8</sup> Rudolf Becker, *Weises Romane und ihre Nachwirkung*, Diss. Berlin 1910, S. 29. Johannes Beinert in *Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte*, Bd. VII, S. 308 ff.



Gesichtspunkt auf und weist auf die Gefahren hin, die daraus entstehen können, wenn das Bürgertum nicht mit seiner bescheidenen Lebenshaltung zufrieden ist und versucht, die wohlhabenderen Schichten der Bevölkerung nachzuahmen. Das Bürgertum muß bürgerlich denken und bürgerlich leben, sonst geht der ganze Staat zu Grunde, das ist der letzte Schluß der Weisheit, die die *Hauptverderber* vortragen: „Welches ist denn besser / ein betrübtes und Sorgen volles Gemüthe in einem schönen Kleide: Oder ein fröhlich und vergnügt Gemüthe in einem schlechten Kleide“. Zufriedenheit und eine vergnügte Seele, das sind nach Weise die wichtigsten Werte bürgerlichen Denkens; seine größten Laster Gottlosigkeit, Machiavellischer Hochmut und Modetorheit. Die letzteren sind die drei Hauptverderber, die König Mistevo gegen die Deutschen ausgesandt hat, um die Wenden an ihnen zu rächen. Während Machiavelli als weiser Berater der Hofleute gelten darf, ist er der Verderber der bürgerlichen Schichten, und der eine Abgesandte Mistevos kann seine Lehren erfolgreich auf den „berühmten Italiäner“ stützen, dessen Lehre er in zwei Punkten wiedergibt:

Erstlich müsse man sich bemühen, immer größer und größer zu werden / und sey dies ein elender Tropff / der mit seinem Zustande könne zu frieden seyn. Darnach sey alles recht und wolgethan / was man auch in dieser Sache vernehmen wolle / es möchte an andern Orten Tugend oder Sünde heißen. . . Denn das sind alberne Köpffe / die da meynen / als wenn solche Kunstgrieffe nur vor Fürsten und Herren geschrieben wären.

In andern Worten: sie *sind* für Fürsten und Herren geschrieben, aber nicht für den Bürger, dessen Losung normaler Weise sein sollte: Schuster bleib bei Deinem Leisten.<sup>9</sup>

Verschwendung, Luxus, Wohlleben, Galanterie, Gelehrsamkeit und das alles geziemt dem Bürger nicht; Arbeitsamkeit und Einfachheit sollen seinen Lebensgang beherrschen. Gewiß, ein Übergang vom einfachen zum wohlhabenden Bürgertum ist durchaus möglich, und wer das Zeug dazu hat, der mag sich getrost an einen derartigen Versuch wagen – Crescentio aus dem *Näscher* ist ein Beispiel dafür, – aber eben nur wer das Zeug dazu hat; alle anderen sollen es bleiben lassen, sonst werden sie politische Näscher. Weise, der stets eine gewisse Neigung zur Erfolgsethik gegenüber einer bloßen Willensethik hat, ist auch hier durchaus bereit zu unterscheiden und dem klugen Kopf zu erlauben, was er dem weniger schlaun verbietet, wie aus der Definition des politischen Näschers erhellt:

<sup>9</sup> Trotz der hier gegebenen Erklärung ist ein gewisser Gegensatz zwischen der rein bürgerlichen Moral der *Hauptverderber* und der nur gelegentlich bürgerlichen Moral der andern Romane Weises unleugbar. Erika Vogt, in einer von Karl Vietor geleiteten Dissertation, erklärt diesen Gegensatz aus der Anlehnung des noch jungen Anfängers an Moscherosch. Diese Erklärung ist sicherlich richtig, doch sei darauf hingewiesen, daß Erika Vogt Weise für viel höfischer ansieht als es der obige Text tut, wodurch der Gegensatz bei ihr erheblich schärfer erscheint. Die Ausnahmestellung der *Hauptverderber* erscheint mir mehr eine Sache der Form als der Moral, doch kommt die Form sicher von Moscherosch. Vgl. *Die gegenhöfischen Strömungen in der deutschen Barockliteratur*, Leipzig 1932, (Von Dt. Poeterey 11).

Ein politischer Näscher ist / der sich umb ein Glücke, umb eine Lust oder sonst umb einen Vorthail bekümmert / der ihm nicht zukömmt / und darüber er sich oft in seiner Hoffnung betrogen findet“ (*Näscher* 11).

Langt also jemand nach derartigen ihm nicht zukommenden Früchten und erhält sie, dann heiligt ihn der Erfolg, und er ist kein politischer Näscher (*Crescentio*); geht es schief, dann muß er sich diesen Spottnamen gefallen lassen. „Nichts ist gut als / was einen guten Ausgang hat“, so spricht nach Weise „die kluge Vernunft“ (*Näscher*, Weg z. w. Glücksel., Nr. 8; vgl. auch Definition der Klugheit am Schluß der *klügsten Leute*<sup>10</sup>). Und so führt uns der *Näscher* die verschiedensten Typen von Menschen vor, die nach solchen Gütern gestrebt haben: wir lernen den schon erwähnten Verwalter kennen, der gern den absoluten Herrscher spielen möchte, den Abenteurer, der zwar Geld gewinnen, aber nicht behalten kann, den Mann, der über seinem Stande heiraten will, den Stutzer, der sich durch seine Kleidung unsterblich lächerlich macht, den reich gewordenen Bürger, der ein Adliger sein möchte, und andere mehr. Sie alle sind Näscher, denn sie wollen alle etwas haben, wozu sie nicht wirklich befähigt sind, was sie also im Grunde nicht einmal besitzen können. Das einzige, was sie vielleicht erreichen können, ist der Schein, aber auch diesen nur auf kurze Zeit, denn kein Schein kann von langer Dauer sein. Das Streben nach diesem falschen Schein gilt aber Weise gerade als das verwerflichste und gefährlichste Verhalten eines Bürgers, gegen das er wieder und wieder zu Felde zieht: Für den erfolglosen Glücksritter hat er nichts übrig. Der Mensch, der nach dem bloßen Schein strebt, gilt Weise als ein Narr: „Ein Kluger erwählet das Gute, welches in der That und in der Wahrheit gut ist. Ein Narr lässet sich den äußerlichen Schein bethören, daß er, wie des Esopi Hund, das wahrhaftige Stück Fleisch aus dem Munde fallen läßt, und nach dem Schatten schnappt“ (*Erznarren* 223). Näscher und Narren sind nahe Verwandte: In törrchem Streben nach scheinbarem Glück machen sie sich selber unglücklich und schädigen das Interesse des Staates, indem sie „die Teutsche Redlichkeit, der Einfalt Schwester“ vernachlässigen (*Hauptverderber*). Wenn Weise nur über diese Gestalten lachte, die sich für Helden, Weise und Heilige auszugeben suchen, ohne auch nur wirklich zu ahnen, was diese Ideale bedeuten und was für Pflichten sie mit sich bringen, so wäre er ein bloßer Fortsetzer der traditionellen Barockkomödie; indem er aber auch auf die Gefahr hinweist, die die Narren und Näscher bedeuten, wird er zum Vorläufer der bürgerlichen Dichtung. Weise sieht nicht mehr spottend auf den närrischen Bürger herab, wie es Gryphius und andere taten, sondern mahnt ernsthaft zur Selbstbesinnung – um der persönlichen wie der allgemeinen Wohlfahrt willen.

Diese Übereinstimmung Weises mit Ideen des 18. Jahrhunderts wird umso deutlicher, wenn er, wie er es ab und zu tut, primitivistische Er-

<sup>10</sup> Ausgabe von 1682. Exemplar der Bibliothek der University of Illinois.

wägungen heranzieht. Weise ist grundsätzlich durchaus kein Primitivist,<sup>11</sup> — seine Bewunderung höfisch-aristokratischer Kultur schließt eine solche Neigung fast automatisch aus, — aber sowohl in den *klügsten Leuten* wie in dem Drama *Die unvergnügte Seele*<sup>12</sup> erscheint doch Weltabgeschlossenheit und Einfachheit als letzte Lösung. Lysias und Florindo in dem Roman, Ferrante und Vertumnus in dem Drama finden ein in größter Einfachheit lebendes Ehepaar (Coridon und Tyrtira, Contento und Quiete), das trotz seines kümmerlichen Auskommens seit Jahrzehnten in größter Liebe und in reinstem Glück gelebt hat. Während die andern Figuren dieser beiden Dichtungen im Auf und Ab von Glück und Unglück, Furcht und Hoffnung befangen sind, haben diese beiden auf der materiell niedrigsten Lebensstufe das seelisch höchste Glück gefunden. Diese Erzählung könnte wörtlich in einer moralischen Wochenschrift stehen; trotzdem werden wir uns hüten müssen, sie zu sehr im Sinne des 18. Jahrhunderts auszulegen. Das 18. Jahrhundert hätte daraus die Folgerung gezogen, daß im Grunde alle sozialen Werte nur Schein, Selbstgenügsamkeit und Weltflucht die einzig vernünftigen Mittel zum Glück seien. Weise will keineswegs sagen, daß alle sozialen Werte nur Schein seien; er begnügt sich mit dem Hinweis darauf, daß die inneren Werte des Menschen ebenfalls von großer Bedeutung sind, ohne damit jedoch den äußeren Werten ihre Bedeutung abzusprechen. Lynas und Florindo, die beiden Unzufriedenen, erscheinen bei Weise nicht als typisch für das Menschengeschlecht überhaupt, sondern eher als Sonderlinge wie Molières *Misanthrope*; auch zeigen sie keine Neigung, sie die erteilte Lehre zunutze zu machen und auf ihre soziale Stellung Verzicht zu leisten. Vergessen wir aber andererseits auch nicht, daß derartige Erwägungen zu den Grundthemen der bürgerlichen Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts gehören, ein neuer Beweis, wie nah ihr Weise in mancher Beziehung schon steht.

Gegenüber den bisher besprochenen Gruppen sind die drei übrigen von geringer Bedeutung. Das Gebot der Sparsamkeit und Einfachheit gilt für den Bauernstand in noch strengerer Form als für den Bürgerstand. Aufs schärfste geißelt Weise im *Bäurischen Machiavellus*<sup>13</sup> das Intriguen-spiel der Dorfverwalter, die, wenn auch ohne direkte Kenntnis der Schriften Machiavellis, seine Lehren nur allzu getreu befolgen und innerhalb ihres kleinen Machtbereiches wie Diplomaten großen Stils eine ränkevolle Politik betreiben. Auch die Neigung der Bauern zu Festen wird am Schluß der *Hauptverderber* von dem Deutschen als ein Zeichen des Verfalls gebrandmarkt. Je weiter wir auf der sozialen Rankleiter hinabsteigen, umso mehr verschärft sich Weises Morallehre. Dem gemeinen Volk gesteht er kaum noch eine eigene Moral zu, seine Moral kommt gewissermaßen nicht von innen, sondern von oben: es ist die Pflicht der oberen Schichten, das Volk an der Leine zu führen, sodaß es keinen Schaden an-

<sup>11</sup> Eine Ausnahme bilden die *Hauptverderber*, denen ein primitivistischer Verfallsgedanke zugrunde liegt, ferner auch das oben Anm. 7 erwähnte Gedicht.

<sup>12</sup> *Deutsche Literatur, Reihe Aufklärung*, Bd. 1, S. 134 ff.

<sup>13</sup> *Deutsche National Litteratur*, Bd. 39, Teil 2, S. 1 ff.

richten kann. Das ist die Lehre, die uns das Drama *Masaniello* in Bezug auf das Volk erteilt. Unheil und Verderben droht dem Staate, in dem die unteren Schichten zur Herrschaft kommen.

Vergegenwärtigen wir uns auf Grund dieser Ausführungen nochmals Weises Stellung zwischen Barock und Aufklärung. Die bloße Tatsache, daß er die Moral als durch ständische Unterschiede bedingt ansieht, trennt ihn von vornherein von der Aufklärung, deren höchstes Ziel die Gleichheit, d. h. die Überwindung dieser Unterschiede war. Grundsätzlich gehört er also dem Barock an. Dem entspricht auch die Ausnahmemoral, die er für den Hof entwirft; der Hof steht zu hoch, als daß er sich mit gewöhnlichen Maßstäben messen ließe. Auch die Verachtung der unteren Schichten gehört ganz dem 17. Jahrhundert an. Die Moral der *beati possidentes* ist für keines der beiden Jahrhunderte besonders charakteristisch, sondern gehört gerade dieser Übergangszeit an, die von Leuten wie Weise, Riemer und Thomasius beherrscht wurde. Der heimischen bürgerlichen Engherzigkeit müde, versuchen es diese höchsten Vertreter nichthöfischen Lebens, sich über ihre eigentliche Sphere zu erheben und mit dem Adel Schritt zu halten, ein Bestreben, das Weise gut heißt und mit der Einführung seines Begriffes des Politischen gerade zu fördern versucht. Nur in einer Beziehung kann Weise wirklich als ein Vertreter des 18. Jahrhunderts gelten, und das ist in seiner bürgerlichen Moral. Wäre dies seine Moral schlechthin, so wichen seine Vorstellungen nur in einem wesentlichen Punkte von denen der Aufklärung ab, nämlich darin, daß der Gedanke des Erfolges noch nicht durch den des Verdienstes überwunden ist. Da diese Moral aber keinen universellen Charakter hat, sondern nur in ständischer Beschränkung gilt, so steht Weise grundsätzlich dem Barock näher, wenn er auch einer der wichtigsten Vorläufer der Aufklärungsbewegung ist. Mochten die ersten Vertreter der Aufklärungsdichtung wie etwa Benjamin Neukirch den „Schwindelgeist der klugen Weisianer“ zurückweisen,<sup>14</sup> sie konnten doch nicht umhin, eine mit Weises Vorstellungen in vielen Punkten übereinstimmende Moral zu verkünden, nur jetzt mit universeller Geltung ohne Ausnahme für hoch und niedrig.

<sup>14</sup> In der Satire „Auf unverständige Poeten“.





## DRAMATIC IRONY IN GOETHE'S "IPHIGENIE AUF TAURIS"

JOHN N. HRITZU

*College of Saint Teresa, Winona, Minn.*

Irony of various species is a favorite device in all dramatic literature. Irony may be tragic, it may be dramatic; it may be directed consciously by the speaker, it may develop unconsciously; it may be sarcastic or ridiculous, satirical or humorous. In tragedy, especially in Greek tragedy, we are accustomed to that species of irony known as tragic. This species is employed when some catastrophe is about to befall a character in the drama, a catastrophe that is not known to, or foreseen by, the victim, but is apparent to the spectators because they either know the plot of the drama or can perceive the catastrophe from the progress of the drama. Tragic irony may be of two kinds: conscious or unconscious. It is conscious when the character, as the speaker, is not himself the victim of any illusion,<sup>1</sup> but he either prepares the catastrophe for some one else or is acquainted with the catastrophe intended for some one else. It is unconscious when the character is the spokesman and at the same time the victim of the impending catastrophe. The latter type of tragic irony is probably the most impressive of the two.<sup>2</sup> The former type occurs frequently in Euripides<sup>3</sup> and in Aeschylus<sup>4</sup> and in Sophocles<sup>5</sup> and even in modern drama.<sup>6</sup>

Irony, constructed as it is on the foundations of misconception and illusion and supported by the props of misapprehension and ambiguity, becomes tragic only when the ignorance leads the character to some catastrophic end. If, however, the ignorance on the part of the character or characters leads not to any doom or catastrophe but simply to the prolongation of the identity of facts, then the resulting situation of irony may be termed dramatic; that species of irony in which the characters in a drama, ignorant of certain facts, fail, because of this ignorance, to realize their objective, although the realization is obviously within their reach. This species of irony is apparently unconscious in the main. The speakers are themselves the victims of the illusion; they themselves are the victims of the mistaken identity. Because of the ignorance of the identity of the characters addressed, their expressions assume an inner and outer meaning. The moments become very tense and surcharged with the emotions of expectation and anxiety, as the speakers approach the brink of recognition only to fall back again into the depths of misapprehension.

Of all the writers of tragedies, Greek as well as foreign, no one has ever even approached the excellence of Sophocles in the use of tragic

<sup>1</sup> Haigh, *Attic Theater*, Oxford, 1907, p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Haigh, p. 176.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Euripides, *Bacch.*, 947-972.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Aeschylus, *Agam.*, 910-913; 973-974.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Sophocles, *Ajax*, 657-659; *Electra*, 1448-1457.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, act 1, scene 5; Middleton, *Changeling*, act 3, scene 2.

irony. He makes use of both kinds of tragic irony, the unconscious as well as the conscious. It is, however, in the employment of the unconscious kind of tragic irony that Sophocles has reached such heights of success that his irony has become proverbial.<sup>7</sup> We are acquainted with Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and with its tragic irony complex. In this play the irony is not confined merely to the language; it runs through the whole situation. In his confidence and in his presumption, Oedipus advances blindfold to his own destruction. The unconscious utterance of the helpless victim and the helplessness of an aware audience combine to produce tragic emotions that defy a definition.

The same degree of success that Sophocles attained in his development of irony in his tragedies, Goethe seems to have attained in his development of irony in his *Iphigenie auf Tauris*. Sophocles manifested his dramatic genius in the employment of tragic irony; Goethe, in dramatic irony. Both focused their special attention on the development of the unconscious type of irony in their drama. In the type of irony developed by Goethe, there is no impending doom or catastrophe of which the characters speak unconsciously nor is the language ominously suggestive of things to come. The presence of the irony is occasioned by equivocation and by ambiguity, by a contrast between the outer and the inner meaning of the language — effected solely through ignorance. Iphigenia is hoping almost against hope to be able to see once again members of her family, her sisters and, if the Gods would only have it, her dearly beloved, young brother, Orestes, who had been taken away, or rather sent away, to relatives for safe-keeping following the murder of their father, Agamemnon. She has no idea either of his whereabouts, or even of his existence on this earth. Nor has Orestes, on the other hand, who has come to Tauris for the purpose of receiving purification from guilt of matricide, any suspicion, whatever, of the presence of his sister, Iphigenia, here at the shrine. This mutual ignorance on the part of sister and brother of each other's fate heightens, tremendously, the irony of the situation when they come face to face with each other, little knowing and realizing that the very persons of whom the one is speaking and for whom the other is pining are tangibly present in flesh and in blood.

The dramatic irony in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* owes its origin to the ambiguous utterance of Apollo, an utterance which is clear, naturally, to the God, but which is ambiguous to, or rather misunderstood by, Orestes. Orestes has murdered his mother at the suggestion and with the approval of Apollo. As a consequence of the murder, he is relentlessly pursued by the furies, the god-sent avengers of blood guilt. After a period of a maddening and sickening pursuit, compassion is finally aroused in the breast of Apollo who promises Orestes deliverance from the pursuit of the furies and purification from the blood guilt of matricide upon the fulfillment of the following instruction:

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Haigh, p. 175.

"Bringst du die Schwester, die an Tauris' Ufer  
Im Heiligtume wider Willen bleibt,  
Nach Griechenland, so löset sich der Fluch." <sup>8</sup>

The dramatic irony, therefore, centers about the identity of two pairs of relatives (Geschwister), Apollo and his sister Diana, the goddess of Tauris, and Orestes and his sister Iphigenia, the priestess at Tauris to the goddess Diana. In his direction and instruction Apollo simply uses the term sister (*Die Schwester*) without modification, never indicating to Orestes the exact identity of that sister. Apollo has reference to Iphigenia, the sister of Orestes; whereas Orestes is ever under the false impression that Apollo's sister, Diana, is the object of the reference.

When we see Orestes for the first time in the drama, we get a better understanding and a clearer appreciation of the portrayal and the development of the irony of the ambiguity, as we hear him speaking the incorrect version of the promise given to his request by Apollo:

Als ich Apollen bat, das gräßliche  
Geleit der Rachegeister von der Seite  
Mir abzunehmen, schien er Hilf' und Rettung  
Im Tempel *seiner vielgeliebten Schwester*,  
Die über Tauris herrscht, mit hoffnungsreichen,  
Gewissen Götterworten zu versprechen; <sup>9</sup>

Orestes despairs of escaping from Tauris; but Pylades, the artful and inventive, attempts to buoy up the low spirits of Orestes by repeating the correct but still ambiguous promise of Apollo:

... Apollo  
Gab uns das Wort: im Heiligtum *der Schwester*  
Sei Trost und Hilf' und Rückkehr dir bereitet. <sup>10</sup>

Pylades adds irony to irony when in the face of the apparent ambiguity of Apollo's utterance he tries to reassure Orestes that divine utterances are not ambiguous:

Der Götter Worte sind nicht doppelsinnig,  
Wie der Gedrückte sie im Anmut wähnt. <sup>11</sup>

The Goethean Pylades is more loquacious than the Eurpidean one. In his conversation with Iphigenia, as he mentions the story and the fate of the family of Agamemnon — Iphigenia's own family — he notices a manifestation by her of a sudden and an unusual interest in the story. His direct question, almost rhetorical, is dramatically ironical, as he asks Iphigenia:

Bist du die Tochter eines Freundes? bist  
Du nachbarlich in dieser Stadt geboren? <sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Goethe, *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, lines 2113-2115.

<sup>9</sup> *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, lines 564-568.

<sup>10</sup> *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, lines 610-612.

<sup>11</sup> *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, lines 613-614.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, lines 886-887.

If Pylades only knew and if Iphigenia could only give the answer! It is this ignorance that makes the situation dramatically ironical.

In the first scene of act three, Iphigenia utters her first expression pregnant with dramatic irony as she turns to Orestes, her real brother, whose bonds of captivity she has just loosened in preparation for the sacrifice, and she calls him: O werter Landsmann!<sup>13</sup> As she concludes her speech she heightens the ironical tenseness of the situation in her expression of thanks, as if in anticipation, to Orestes and to Pylades for having brought to her such moments of hope and of joy:

Wie soll ich euch genug mit Freud' und Segen  
Empfangen, die ihr mir das Bild der Helden,  
Die ich von Eltern her verehren lernte,  
Entgegenbringt und das innre Herz  
Mit neuer, schöner Hoffnung schmeichelnd labet!<sup>14</sup>

Orestes, too, like Pylades, becomes curious about the identity of Iphigenia; her answer to his inquiry concerning her name and her family is surcharged with dramatic irony: Du sollst mich lernen!<sup>15</sup>

How true is the statement, and for that reason, how ironical it is for a sister to tell her brother that he will soon come to know her identity! The irony waxes stronger and more dramatic when for the first time the process of recognition comes closer to its climax with the mention of names. The irony assumes the quality of the dramatic for the reason that the ignorance is only partial at any given time; that is, knowledge is concealed only from one of the two persons engaged in conversation. It is always the other person of the duet that is in ignorance of the identification. Thus, when Iphigenia asks Orestes whether Orestes and his and her older sister Electra are alive, how dramatic and ironical it is for Orestes to answer in the affirmative: Sie leben.<sup>16</sup> Iphigenia, naturally enough, seems unable to restrain her emotions on hearing the answer to her proposed question, a setting that proves proper for Orestes' ironic exclamation as he warns her of future restraint of further outbursts and advises her, in ironic truth, to prepare and control herself for the relay of information concerning the unfolding of the story of the tragedy of the family of Agamemnon, the tragedy in reality of her own family:

Bist du gastfreundlich diesem Königshause,  
Bist du mit nähern Banden ihm verbunden,  
Wie deine schöne Freude mir verrät,  
So bändige dein Herz und halt es fest!<sup>17</sup>

Each remark from the lips of Orestes and of Iphigenia lends a note and tone of intensification to the onward rush of the progress of the development of the irony of the situation. How ironical is Orestes' reply

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., line 941.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., lines 944-948.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., line 952.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., line 982.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., lines 985-988.



(O, könnte man von seinem Tode sprechen!))<sup>18</sup> to Iphigenia's no less ironical imperative; Sprich mir von Orest.<sup>19</sup> The dramatic irony is nearing its climax for Iphigenia. Immediately precedent to the crash and the stroke of the force of the climax upon Iphigenia, Orestes satisfies Iphigenia's insistence upon his relation of the true story of the flight of Orestes (i. e., of himself), from the avenging furies.<sup>20</sup> Pylades, however, previously had concocted a false story about Orestes, telling Iphigenia that Orestes was Laodamas, his eldest brother, and the eldest son of King Adrastus. Laodamas has killed his youngest brother in a quarrel over inheritance.<sup>21</sup> The real Orestes had no knowledge of this concoction and for this reason is stunned momentarily by Iphigenia's ironical remark of genuine identification, upon hearing the story of the real Orestes:

Unseliger, du bist in gleichem Fall,  
Und fühlst, was er, der arme Flüchtling leidet! <sup>22</sup>

With almost every statement Iphigenia and Orestes identify themselves without knowing it. Iphigenia is telling Orestes in effect, that he, the unidentified Orestes, is suffering the same mental confusion and torture and anguish that the real Orestes of the story had suffered. How really ironical and dramatical is the statement, since the similarity of events is occasioned not by likeness but by actual identity! How well Orestes realizes this identity as he, as if realizing Iphigenia's awareness of him, asks with a start:

Was sagst du mir? Was wahnst du gleichen Fall? <sup>23</sup>

When Iphigenia explains the meaning of her statement, indicating that she had reference merely to the similarity of torture suffered by Laodamas, the fictioned Orestes, and the real Orestes, the matricide, Orestes can no longer brook delay and ends the game of misrepresentation as with an expression of complete sincerity and truthfulness he remarks tersely: Ich bin Orest! <sup>24</sup> The curtain of the last act of the scene of the dramatic irony concerning the identity of Orestes falls down with dramatic suddenness and force. One half of the problem of the mistaken identity has been solved. Iphigenia now knows the identity of the stranger. But the problem is not completely solved until Orestes has become convinced of the identity of the priestess standing before him.

The lines<sup>25</sup> that follow immediately upon Orestes expression of his identity are very ironical and dramatical, although they do not as such advance the story of Iphigenia's identity. Orestes does not expect freedom from sacrifice as a consequence of his revelation to Iphigenia. In

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., line 1051.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., line 1050.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., lines 1051-1070.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., lines 824-836.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., lines 1072-1073.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., line 1073.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., line 1083.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., lines 1083 ff.

almost tragic earnestness — the quality that intensifies the ironic effect of the passage — Orestes wishes, directly, to Iphigenia and to Pylades, and indirectly to himself, success in the flight to Greece where a new lease on life and on happiness may be taken. If only the veil of irony could have been removed and if he had only known that he was including himself in that wish of a successful escape!

Orestes must now endure alone the brunt of the weight of the dramatic irony, Iphigenia knows his identity; he does not know hers. The remarks of Iphigenia now assume a heightened inner and outer meaning. How profoundly ironical is her remark to Orestes' insistence that she forget him, the criminal, and that she cease to implicate herself in his tragedy of miseries and woes: *Mein Schicksal ist an deines fest gebunden.*<sup>26</sup> Iphigenia now utters Orestes' name in dead earnest for she knows his identity. She endeavors to direct his attention to the truth of her forth-coming confession of self identification. After she has learned from the lips of Orestes that besides Electra he had another younger sister, i. e., Iphigenia, she is completely convinced of his identity and with dramatic terseness she utters these words of revelation:

Orest, ich bin's! Sieh Iphigenien!  
Ich lebe! <sup>27</sup>

The gravity of the weight of the revelation is too heavy for Orestes to bear. He expresses a deep sense of doubt as he responds: *Du! Laß! Hinweg!* <sup>28</sup> In fact, so certain does he feel the error in Iphigenia's statement that he even threatens her with violence should she insist on coming nearer to demonstrate her signs of sisterly affection:

Ich rate dir, berühre nicht die Locken!  
Wie von Kreusas Brautkleid zündet sich  
Ein unauslöschlich Feuer von mir fort.  
Laß mich! Wie Herkules will ich Unwü'd'ger  
Den Tod voll Schmach, in mich verschlossen, sterben.<sup>29</sup>

It requires the refreshing effects of a trance <sup>30</sup> and the reassurance of a friend like Pylades <sup>31</sup> to convince Orestes of the identity of Iphigenia.

Thus is concluded the presentation in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* of the dramatic irony involving the mistaken identity of Orestes and Iphigenia and the subsequent scene of recognition. It seems to me that Goethe in his drama has developed for us a species of dramatic irony no less remarkable in its effects than that species of tragic irony developed by Sophocles in his tragedies.

The presence of irony in a Greek tragedy was consistent with the

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., line 1122.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., lines 1173-1174.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., line 1174.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., lines 1175-1179.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., lines 1223 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., lines 1332 ff.

Greek notion of the irony of human destiny and the futility of human wisdom.<sup>32</sup> An abundance as well as meagerness of knowledge can be equally futile and even harmful. By gaining an abundance of information, Oedipus in Sophocles *Oedipus Rex* arrived at the revelation of his own acts of monstrosity; by the absence of sufficient information, Iphigenie in Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* approached dangerously close to the enactment of her brother's, Orestes', sacrifice. Tragic irony gains momentum by its directive suggestiveness of what is about to happen; dramatic irony, of what may happen. Tragic irony is the irony of catastrophe; dramatic irony, of ambiguity.

The interest and the pathos of such a spectacle is intense and all absorbing. The audience would not be properly motivated or could not be unless the veil of the secret were removed from their eyes, unless the consequences of the irony were known to and foreseen by the spectators who become fully acquainted with the plot. These themes of irony and of destiny necessitated the presence in these dramas of irony of a recognition scene of anagnorisis,<sup>33</sup> a scene in which all ambiguity is revealed, a scene in which those involved discover too late, to their sorrow, as in the *Oedipus Rex* or before it is too late, as in *Iphigenie auf Tauris*, the real nature of their position, when they have through ignorance either committed, or have been upon the point of committing, some fatal deed.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Haigh, 346.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics*, ch. 16.



## RUDOLF G. BINDINGS KUNSTAUFFASSUNG

V. BEZDEK

Loyola University

In einer kühnen Analogie dürfte man einen Zusammenhang zwischen den Bezeichnungen „griechisch – einfach“ bei Binding und dem Goetheschen „klassisch“ aufspüren, wie es Eckermann im Gespräche mit Goethe am 2. April 1829 verzeichnet hatte: „Klassisch . . . ist stark, frisch, froh und gesund“.

Das letztere einigende Charakteristikon bei Binding ist hervorzuheben. Den dauernden Nachklang der griechischen Reise, die den Säumer erweckte und aus ihm den Dichter bilden half / in Rom wandte er die Augen von allem ab, was nicht griechisch war /, hört man durch seine ganze dichterische Tätigkeit.

Mit seiner vereinfachten Lebensführung hängt die heitere Schlichtheit der Kunstübung zusammen, im Sinne von Kasimir Edschmids Manifest von 1913: „Erst am Ende aller Dinge steht das Schlichteste.“

Bindings Personen sind wie mit einer Linie, mit einem einfachen überzeugenden Zug porträtiert, ohne belastende Details der realistischen Ornamentik. „Wer sind die Menschen des Dichters?“, fragen wir. „Haben sie eine besondere Seinsart? Ja, durchaus. Es sind Menschen, die berufen erscheinen, nicht so sehr etwas Besonderes zu leisten als besondere Schicksale zu erleben.“<sup>1</sup> Ihr Leben wird „offenbart“ in der Geisteswelt, die gedacht, gefühlt, erschaffen wird für freie Personen, mit keinem Raum für menschliche beschwerende Kleinprobleme, für materielle Bedürfnisse einer materiellen Welt. Auch in seiner epischen Rückkehr in die lebende Vergangenheit / *Erlebtes Leben* / betont Binding die Geistesherrschaft in dem Sinne, daß die Fakta ihm nur Nebenbegleiter der Ideen sind – darum soviel Bilder, Formungen, Erläuterungen, Ausführungen seiner Geistesentdeckerfahrten.<sup>2</sup>

Er nahm die Realität im Alltag mit derselben Ausdauer, Demut und Glauben an – wie die der Kunst. Ja mehr: die künstlerische Gestaltung übertreffe die gegenwärtige und darum vergängliche Tatsache der Sinne durch ihre Ständigkeit, durch ihren inneren Wert für den Geist: die künstlerische Tatsache sei die rechte Tatsache. Hören wir ja ein wenig Bindings schöpferischem Wort selbst zu: „Die Geschöpfe der Kunst existieren nicht im Leben. Sie haben ihr eigenes Leben. Sie sind stärker, eindringlicher, unvergeßlicher – als die Gestalten des uns umgebenden Daseins. Sie sind keine Abbilder sondern Eigenbilder: Eigenbilder der Form.“<sup>3</sup> Andere haben es ähnlich ausgedrückt: Die Kunst beginnt, wo die Natur endet.

Im J. 1924 erschien sein erstes Hauptwerk *Aus dem Kriege*. Die eigentliche Geschichte eines Kriegs kann nicht geschrieben werden.

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Simon in *Frankfurter Ztg.* vom 13. Aug. 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Chronologische Reihenfolge wichtigerer Werke: *Legenden der Zeit*, 1909 *Die Geige*, '11. *Gedichte*, '13. *Unsterblichkeit*, '21. *Aus dem Kriege*, '24, *Erlebtes Leben*, '27. *Rufe und Reden*, '28. *Ausgewählte und neue Gedichte*, '30. – *Gesammeltes Werk*, '28, IV Bde.; '37, V Bde. Hier zitiert nach der 1937 Gesamtausgabe.

<sup>3</sup> *Vom Leben der Plastik* G. Kolbes. Ges. W., V, 296.



„Draußen starben alle Lieder . . . wie alles Leben starb.“<sup>4</sup> Der beliebte Kriegsautor seiner Jugendzeit, Carl von Clausewitz, hat ihn darauf früher mit anderen Worten vorbereitet: „Im Kriege ist alles einfach, aber das Einfache ist schwer.“<sup>5</sup> In reifen Jahren ließ es Binding zu, offensichtlich nach einem mißlungenen Versuch, die ursprünglichen Briefe und Notizen umzuarbeiten: „Diese Aufzeichnungen widersetzen sich der Bearbeitung, Glättung oder Ausführung. Zu Ehren des Urkundlichen, zur Wahrung des Ursprünglichen sind sie unberührt geblieben.“<sup>6</sup>

Dieses Kriegstagebuch enthält eine kritische und analysierende Beichte eines bis zum Schluß / Juli 1918 / an den Sieg glaubenden Patrioten, der jedoch imstande ist, klar zu unterscheiden und es stellenweise auch ironisch sehen zu lassen / die Kriegsaneidenschaft.<sup>7</sup> Nach dem Autor selbst wurde sein Buch von keinem anderen Werk der zahlreichen Kriegsliteratur sowohl in der Authentizität wie im künstlerischen Wert übertroffen.<sup>8</sup>

Der ideelle Zwang gegen jede Änderung war stärker als alle Hindernisse – und des Autors Verzicht auf irgendeine Neubearbeitung dieser zeitgemäßen Kriegseindrücke ist für unsere Beurteilung maßgebend. Es gibt einen gewaltigen verbindenden Leitgedanken zwischen *Aus dem Kriege* und nachfolgenden Werken, besonders *Erlebtes Leben* und den sporadisch in Magazinen und Zeitungen verstreuten kürzeren Äußerungen der zwanziger Jahre, die der erheblichen Sammlung *Rufe und Reden* zugrunde liegen. Diese führende Idee ist *das Erlebnis*. Es ist das Prinzip seiner Kunstauffassung durch alle späteren Jahre. Es ist die unumstößliche Überzeugung vom Absoluten des persönlichen, nichtpapiernen und einmaligen Erlebnisses, das durch nichts ersetzt werden kann. Nach G. Lange meldete sich B. an die Front „um des beglückenden Erlebnisses willen“.<sup>9</sup>

Im Alter von 60 Jahren kehrt er in seine Erinnerungen zurück – „es gibt nirgendwo etwas Stärkeres als im Innern“ – und bearbeitet einen reichen Zeitraum von Geschehnissen der „gegenwärtigen“ Vergangenheit zu einer dichterischen Autobiographie *Erlebtes Leben* – so etwas nach Goethes Muster: „ . . . den Menschen . . . darzustellen und zu zeigen, . . . wie er sich eine Welt und Menschenansicht . . . bildet und wie er sie, wenn er Künstler, Dichter, Schriftsteller ist, wieder nach außen abspiegelt.“<sup>10</sup> Binding hält die Aufgabe für „ein unendliches Geschenk, das . . . / ihm / zugefallen war“.<sup>11</sup>

Der empfindsame Leser entdeckt seine große Not um die Lebensmächtigkeit des Wortes, das eben so schöpferisch genommen werden soll – wie die Idee. „Das . . . was ich von meinem Leben zu berichten vermag,

<sup>4</sup> *Erlebtes Leben*. G. W., IV, 276.

<sup>6</sup> *Aus dem Kriege*. G. W., III, 9.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 200 ff. u. *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> „Es gibt Bücher die mehr als Bücher sind“, 1927. *Rufe u. Reden*, 236. – Vgl. Bindings verwerfende Rezension / *Die Lit.*, 31. Juni 1929, 505-6 / von Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*: Es sei ein Buch der Einfühlung, aus zweiter Hand, das nicht erlebt und darum „*ex post*, hinterrücks“ hineingedacht worden sei. Remarques Kriegsroman hatte schon damals im Propyläen-Verlag eine unerhörte Auflagenziffer von fast 500.000 Exemplaren erreicht.

<sup>9</sup> Tag, 1927, 193 / zitiert aus *Die Lit.*, 30, 28 /.

<sup>10</sup> Goethe, *Dichtung u. Wahrheit*, Einf.

<sup>11</sup> *Erl. Leben*. G. W., IV, 218.

liegt nicht hinter mir . . . Ich kann . . . nur von dem berichten was in mir lebt und was ich somit erlebte, was als Erlebtes in mich überging, was noch immer mein ist . . . Es wird ein Gegenwärtiges beschworen.“<sup>12</sup> Nicht nur so: das Erlebnis verliert seinen Wert, indem man es in der Vergangenheit sozusagen zergehn läßt. *Erlebtes Leben* wurde nicht als ein Denkmal eines gewesenen Lebens gedacht: niemals lebte der Autor in der Vergangenheit und wollte seinen Tod in keiner Form überdauern.<sup>13</sup> – Einige Jahre später hat er neue Worte für alten Glauben geprägt: „Jede Landschaft . . . muß neu erobert werden von dem Geschlecht der Lebenden. Anders trägt sie.“<sup>14</sup>

Das expressionistische Gepräge von *Erlebtes Leben* wird sichtbar sofort am Anfange des Werkes, wo einige Richtlinien festgelegt werden. Das Eigenlob sei ausgeschlossen, sagt der Autor in der Einführung. Da handle es sich um das Typische, das Gemeinsame, das menschlich Allgemeine, was den Geist des Buches arten solle. Die erste Person des Erzählers werde eine unpersönliche, neutrale Stimme der Generation:

„Indem ich es jedoch in diesem Augenblicke vor mir sehe als etwas das ich nun erst in besonderem Sinne durchschreite, will es mich bedünken als sei es nicht mehr mein Leben von dem ich berichte, als sei vielmehr der Bericht von meinem Leben ein Bericht von vielen Leben, die unsichtbar und unhörbar für einander alle den gleichen Weg gingen. Nicht im Einzelnen und Persönlichen natürlich, sondern im Großen und Gemeinsamen. Denn eines Menschen Leben – und wäre er der Größte – ist icht loszulösen aus der Zeit die er mit andern teilte. Man möchte meinen, daß ein solches Leben für das andere eintreten müsse und daß daher auch meines für andere stehe.“<sup>15</sup>

Theoretisch hatte der Dichter seine unnachgiebige Stellung schon früher / und an mehreren Stellen / durchgearbeitet, als er als offiziöser Wortführer für jüngere Richtungen den Weg zu bahnen hatte. Die Ähnlichkeit der Darstellungen von 1928 erinnert einen an die im Grunde bejahende Annahme der Nachkriegsdichtungstendenzen in 1921: „Das wesentliche des heutigen Expressionismus als Zeiterscheinung ist . . . das Dasein, das große umspannende Weltgefühl, in das man aus Einzelheiten des Naturalismus hinüberpendelte – die Dauererregung, das Erleben, das Leben an sich, das für alle gilt.“<sup>16</sup> In konkreteren Terminen: es gibt nicht mehr Einzelheiten / Freunde, Not, Straßen / als Tatsache, es gibt nur „Vision davon“, nicht mehr Individuen „in ihrem Milieu . . .“, es erscheint vielmehr nur noch das Menschliche an ihnen . . ., es ist nur noch Mensch“.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 12. Vgl. Anmerkungen, 370.

<sup>13</sup> S. sein *Vixi. Omnis moriar* in „Dichterglaube“, G. W., V, 391.

<sup>14</sup> „Moselfahrt aus Liebeskummer“ / 1932 /, G. W., V, 79.

<sup>15</sup> *Erl. Leben*. G. W., IV, 11: Vorbericht. – Vgl. *ibid.*, 143.

<sup>16</sup> „Lage der Dichter von 1920“, / 1921 /, R. u. R., 193 f.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

Bindings Kunst ist schöpferisch, schaffend, bildend. Obzwar den expressionistischen Varianten nahe, stellt er sich nicht ausnahmslos in ihre Dienste. Er schafft „Gestaltung“ – was ihm weder im Naturalismus mit der passiven Umschreibung der Dinge noch im Expressionismus mit dem überwiegenden Subjektivismus und gesuchten stilistischen Requisiten gelingen will. Seine Richtung geht vielleicht an mehreren Plätzen parallel mit den Expressionisten / er selbst läßt es nirgendwo zu / , jedoch um eine Neuerung fühlt er sich reicher: Gestaltung. „Ich gestalte Visionen von Dingen . . . , die Dinge als neue Wesen und Wesenheiten, ganz und gar widersprechend / vielleicht / ihrer irdischen Beschaffenheit und dennoch so stark und eindrucksvoll, so sinnlich sicht- und vorstellbar, so unwiderleglich und zwingend, daß sie die von dir geschauten weit hinter sich lassen und ewiger Wahrhaftigkeit teilhaft werden.“<sup>18</sup> Und mehrere Jahre später: „Aus dem Willen zur höheren Wirklichkeit / nicht aus dem Willen zum Schein / ist Kunst mächtig, schöpft sie ihr Recht, ihr höheres Recht und ihre höhere Macht.“<sup>19</sup> Der Naturalismus und die Romantik nannten und schilderten die Dinge „statt sie in Verbindung mit dem Ewigen zu bringen“, während die *neue* Kunstform / der Expressionismus? / *bildet*: Gestaltung, „nicht mehr Schilderung, Mikroskopierung, Auffaserung, auch nicht mehr Wiedergabe oder Abbild“.<sup>20</sup> Man spürt ja des Dichters Bedarf, die Seichtheit der Illusionistik und der Relativität der Werte zu vermeiden.

Zur näheren Verfolgung von Bindings Konzeption der „Gestaltung“ möge noch eine spätere Auseinandersetzung dienen:

„Kunst . . . will nie Schein; keinerlei Schein – auch den sogenannten schönen nicht. Kunst will / wenn sie überhaupt etwas ‚will‘ – worüber noch zu reden ist / Wirklichkeit, *ist* Wirklichkeit; und zwar eine höhere, eindringlichere, stärkere, unverwischbare, daher meist einfachere als die Natur oder das Leben sie zu geben vermag. – Sie will allein dies . . . sie will weder Nahbild noch Fernbild, besonders aber keinesfalls Abbild des Lebens, sondern sie hat es mit einer höheren, ja mit der äußersten Wirklichkeit zu tun die von den Dingen denkbar, sagen wir lieber: vorstellbar ist. Sie setzt immer die Dinge selbst, den Inbegriff der Dinge. – Kunst will Wahrheit. Sie tut nie ‚als ob‘ . . . sie spiegelt nichts vor . . . sie will nichts beschönigen . . . Sie will es vielmehr erst recht eigentlich ‚wirklich‘ machen; daher ihre Unerbittlichkeit, ihre mißverständene Unverblümtheit, Deutlichkeit, Nacktheit und Unbekümmtheit.“<sup>21</sup>

Binding-Künstler durchlebt das Dasein anders als andere Künstler – und darum, indem er Dinge aus seiner Empfindung gestaltet, verdient er

<sup>18</sup> „Lage der Dichter . . .“, *loc. cit.*, 202 f. – S. auch sein kritisches Lob Fritz von Unruhs in „Dichter und Redner“, / 1923 / *ibid.*, 207 ff. und von neuem 236.

<sup>19</sup> „Rechtfertigung der Kunst“, / 1927 /, G.W., V, 362 f.

<sup>20</sup> „Lage der Dichter . . .“, R. u. R., 192 f.

<sup>21</sup> „Rechtfertigung d. Kunst“, *loc. cit.*, 363-4. Zum ersten Male 1928 in R. u. R., 60 f.

den Namen „Schöpfer“. Er schafft, weil er mehr tun kann als bloß „noch einmal bilden oder nachahmen“. Er bildet *einmal*, nicht *noch einmal*. Diese Unabhängigkeit im Schaffen, gegen die Sinnesordnung, gegen die wahrnehmbare Pseudorealität / im künstlerischen Sinne! / ist ein reiner expressionistischer Zug.

An die reifen Jahre paßt mehr und mehr die grundlegende Kritik „keine prometheische Gestalt“ und wenig ist hier hinzuzugeben, was noch nicht gesagt wurde. Die Liebe zum richtigen Verhältnis, zur Proportionalität gehört zu Bindings dichterischer Weisheit in den Legenden wie in den Gedichten, in den Reden wie in den Selbstberichten „letzter Hand“. Sein scheidender Geist bändigt die Phantasie, weil er von ihrer Macht weiß: „... und wenn du willst, lustwandelt das Gestein.“ Es gibt keine Entwicklungsstufen im Bindingschen Schaffensdrang. *Nova et vetera* fließen zusammen in einen verstehenden Ton – für verstehendes Herz. Binding nützt ungezwungen, willig die Freiheit aus, ganz er selbst zu sein. Darum erkennt er nie irgendeine literarische Abhängigkeit oder Verwandtschaft an, obwohl seine Belesenheit bewundernswert sein mußte. Er scheut sogar Namen, indem er literarische Bewegungen bespricht. Und sein Wort hat Geltung unter den Verständigen.

Bindings Novellen sagen nichts von der Umwelt – sie sind nur vom Geist, von Gedankenstärke, von Wort und Tat eingenommen. Der Geist allein ist kein bleibendes Verdienst von Binding: es war meist ein vom Expressionismus einseitig betontes Werkzeug. Bei Binding finden wir eine glückliche sinnerfüllte Einheit, die von Geist und Leben, Geist und Wirklichkeit gebildet ist: der Geist ist kein Ersatz für das Stoffliche. – Das merkwürdige Verhältnis von Schöpfer und Geschöpfen in dieser Kleinkunst könnte man als einen Ausgangspunkt für Charakterstudien des Autors benutzen. In jedem Fall besitzen wir in ihr ein redlich und untrügerisch geartetes Beispiel meisterhaft schöpferischer Gelassenheit.

Wie beurteilt Binding selbst die technischen Hilfsmittel der Expressionisten zum lyrischen Effekt?

„Ob eine Dichtung, sei es Prosa oder Vers, marottenhaft Artikel wegläßt, ihre Sätze zu bloßen Ausrufen, zum Schrei zusammenballt – oder dergleichen, macht sie nicht expressionistisch, wie das Gegenteil sie nicht naturalistisch oder romantisch ... machen würde. – Das Schöpferische liegt nicht im Stil, sondern in der Gestaltung. – Gestaltung ist der Akt eines Schöpfers. Ein Schöpfer will Wirklichkeit. Wie? Durch die Gestaltung.“<sup>22</sup>

Wie gehoben steht der Dichter über der Geziertheit, über den Künsteleien des Wortes. Ihm wird der Gedanke und seine Macht zum Halfter der Imagination, zur Leine der Feder – nicht die geleimte Form, das eingezwangene Gleis. Seine kultivierte Sprache, „deren Kunstgeheimnis Versinnlichung des Übersinnlichen heißt“, ist durch die nüchterne Unbefangenheit charakterisiert, mit der der Dichter seine geistigen Hervorbrin-

<sup>22</sup> „Lage der Dichter ...“, *loc. cit.*, 199 – und „Rechtfertigung d. Kunst“, *loc. cit.*, 365 f.



gungen an den Leser zu bringen vermag. Die „Gestikulation“ der Worte ist spärlich und unauffallend – so ist der Autor vorsichtig auch mit den Satzzeichen; er weiß ja seinen kompromißlosen Standpunkt auch theoretisch zu begründen. Sein Vergleich mit anderen Weltsprachen wirkt sehr überzeugend und verdient breitere fachmännische Aufmerksamkeit.<sup>23</sup>

Zur Frage der Religion: In expressionistischen Dichtungen nimmt der Heiligenkult und das Religionsgefühl eine bedeutungsvolle Stelle ein. Nicht so bei Binding, obzwar er Religionssujets aus seiner Schöpfung nicht verbannt. In den *Legenden* benutzt er frei einige himmlische Gestalten, aber nur zugunsten symbolischer Wirkung. Die Weise der Bearbeitung läßt keinen Zweifel, daß es sich um Symbole handelt, um erdenfreudige Mitmenschen. Für Gott finden wir nur ein nachsichtiges Lächeln. Bindings offener Kampf gegen die Religion in häufigen Reden nimmt scharfe, ja abstoßende Formen an und seine gegenreligiösen Äußerungen sprechen eine beredte Sprache: „Glaube engt ein. Glaube hat Voraussetzungen, erkennt Voraussetzungen an. Es ist die Kette an der die Vorstellung liegt, die selbstgeschmiedete Kette des Menschen, das selbstgewirkte Gängelband.“<sup>24</sup> Jeder Glaube an überirdische Existenz oder an ein Obergeschöpf, das dem Menschen übergeordnet wäre, ist in direkten Angriffen gegen die Religion am schroffsten ausgeschlossen:

„An nichts zu glauben, um keine Grenzen des Glaubens zu haben: vielleicht ist das eines Dichters Glaube. – Ich glaube an kein Jenseits: um des Diesseits willen. Ich glaube an keine Unsterblichkeit: um des Lebens willen. Ich glaube an keinen Schöpfer: um des Geborenen willen. Ich glaube an keinen Gott in mir oder im Wurm oder in irgendeiner Gestalt: um des Menschen und jeglicher Gestalt willen.“<sup>25</sup>

Bindings Philosophie kann verschiedene Namen aufnehmen, sein Leben aber bezeugt ein hohes Ethos, eine ethische Aufrichtigkeit, die zusammen mit der Naturliebe jede formelle Gruppenreligion zu ersetzen vermag. „Ein Heide vielleicht, aber von der Art, wie sie Gott leiden mag“,<sup>26</sup> schätzt ihn sein Freund in einer Gedächtniserinnerung. – Bindings Stellung gegen die Religionsgefühlswelgerei war keineswegs mehr gegenchristlich als die Hauptmanns oder die Tolstojs, die doch beide den Christengeist vor dem Dogmatismus zu retten suchten – und darum von den rechtgläubigen Kirchgängern so vielen Vorwurf einstecken mußten. Auch Spinoza war einmal einer Gegenreligion beschuldigt worden, obzwar seine tiefe Ethik und die Religion als eins und „ebenbürtig“ angesehen werden müssen.

Bindings Religion war ein Entzücken über das Leben selbst, ein eifervolles Streben zur Annäherung des Erlebnisses und des sittlichen Ziels,

<sup>23</sup> R. u. R., der letzte Artikel „Über Zeichensetzen“. Von diesem Winkel aus ist seine originelle Interpunktion zu begreifen.

<sup>24</sup> „Dichterglaube.“ G. W., V, 394.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 391.

<sup>26</sup> Ernst Penzoldt, „Ritterliche Erscheinung“, *Neue Runsch.*, 49, II, Sept. 1938, 311.

zur Verwandlung des Lebens in die Kunstform. Dabei ist er kein Mystiker, er will keiner sein. Er meidet die Gefahr des Unklaren, des Verschwommenen, das die Mystik setzt, voraussetzt und in dunklen Worten ausdrückt. Nie so einen Gedanken kann der Leser in seinen Werken vorfinden, wie in Werfels *Magischer Trilogie*, nie einen Spiegelmenschen, nie eine Spiegelwelt, die verschwinden könnte, um einer „realen“ Raum zu machen. Überhaupt keinen mystischen Spiegel<sup>27</sup> statt gewöhnlicher Fenster, keine überirdischen Reflexe statt des schlichten Tageslichts. Seine *Legenden*, in denen die Voraussetzung des wirklichen Geschehens völlig aufgehoben ist, sind nicht als gegenchristlich oder nur ironisch anzusehen. Die himmlischen Personen, mit „feinem und weisem Humor“ porträtiert, sind bloß verkleidete Erdgeborene, mit keiner Beziehung zur Religion. Darum bleiben sie immer erdgebunden und für irdischen „Verbrauch“ bestimmt – auch mit ihren hoch emporlodernden Gefühlen und Taten – wie ihr Erschaffer selbst, der „mit beiden Füßen auf Erden steht“.

Der expressionistische Gedanke des Kollektivismus kommt nur in Bindings politischer Konzeption vor – er wurde nicht realistisch in größeren Werken durchgeführt und auch nirgends anders / mit der Ausnahme von *Erlebtes Leben* / prinzipiell ausgearbeitet. In späteren literarischen Polemiken<sup>28</sup> sieht man versprechende Anläufe, aber diese sollen ja nicht den halbpolitischen Turnierplatz überschreiten. Wir suchen vergebens ausgedehnte Entwürfe, die sich an die Masse wenden oder mit ihr arbeiten würden. An einigen Stellen kann man ja sogar eine Antipathie gegen die Menge durchschimmern sehen.<sup>29</sup>

Sowohl Bindings theoretische Skizzen über den Wert der Kunst – als auch seine Gestalten strotzen von Symptomen der *Neuen Sachlichkeit*, tragen die Züge des gehärteten Nachkriegsmenschen, der die Lektion des Krieges, dieser immer noch mitwirkenden Betäubung / nicht des Irrtums! / auszubeuten weiß. Er ist unromantisch und sachlich wie der nichtvergessene *Gentleman*. Er zähmt seine Gefühle, um später desto freier zu werden. Er triumphiert, indem er der Versuchung neuer Nietzschescher Krämpfe entgegensteht. Der Mangel an untätiger Träumerei ist jedoch das Hauptverdienst des harten, unsentimentalen, reservierten, gesitteten und ausgeglichenen Helden, des politisch wissenden und erfahrenen Kindes des Frank, des von Hofmannsthal und des blendenden *Aktivismus*.

Binding beschäftigte sich oft mit der Verknüpfung zwischen „seiner“ Kunst und den expressionistischen Neuerungen und widmete dem kulminierenden Modernismus manche günstige Deutungen und Auseinandersetzungen:

„Es ist nicht zu leugnen, daß der Expressionismus insoweit eine eminent adelige, ja aristokratische Haltung hat, indem er

<sup>27</sup> Es gibt doch einen Spiegel in seinen kleineren Werken, *Spiegelgesprächen*, aber er hat nur seine ursprüngliche, sachliche Bedeutung. G. W., V, 11–73.

<sup>28</sup> Teilweise selbständig in *Rufe und Reden*, 1928. Eine Auswahl davon später in Ges. Werk eingenommen.

<sup>29</sup> S. den Brief vom 19. Juli 1918 in *Aus dem Kriege*, G. W., III, 355 und 363.

eine Über-Hebung aus allem Niveau sucht. Denn es ist natürlich eminent vornehm und künstlerisch, den eigentlichen Boden der Natur, wenschon man ihn fest unter den Füßen spürt, zu verlassen und die Empfindung lediglich in Gestalt einer Vision . . . zugewandt nur dem Wesentlichen und Ewigen, aus ihr und aus sich selbst hinauszustellen. — Die klägliche Hilfe der Schilderung, die erbärmliche Kiesstraße der Annäherung durch Besichtigung, Betastung und Erforschung . . . zu vertauschen und zu verlassen zugunsten einer nur mit innerer Wahrheit gestützten, gekräftigten und wirkenden Gestalt. — Und wäre Kunst mehr als dieses? Es erweist sich denn auch, . . . daß alle tiefste Kunst expressionistischer Art ist / Mona Lisa Lionardo's /. — . . . alle wahre Kunst ist aller Zeiten Expressionismus im eigentlichsten und tiefsten Sinne.“<sup>30</sup>

Da liegt's klar auf der Hand, wie er das Übermaß der Erscheinungen zu einfachen und stilisierten Seelenabenteuern zu bändigen vermochte. Das wäre ein höchst expressionistischer Zug. Aber seine äußerste Einfühlung und Erkenntnis galt der Verwandlung der eigenen hiesigen täglichen Wirklichkeit. Diese war ihm die höchste Kunstform — und das ist wieder ein realistischer Beitrag. „Mögen auch Abgerücktheit, Distanz und Verkleidungen die Dinge in ein anderes Licht und Farbenspiel rufen, man fühlt ihre Nähe und Echtheit.“<sup>31</sup>

So haben wir Punkt für Punkt alle Merkmale durchgenommen, die als „expressionistisch“ / aus allen modernen Richtungen ist ihm doch der Expressionismus am nächsten / in Betracht kommen können: Religionsgefühl — Geist — Seele — Massenschicksal — Typen — geballte Sprache. Bei gründlicher Berücksichtigung sind wir zur Ansicht gelangt, daß ein einziges Gesamtaufklebeschild für Bindings Schöpfung viel Gefahr mit sich bringt: ihr Wesen ist zu eigenartig, um in eine Gruppe eingereiht zu werden. Bindings Grundeinstellung zur Kunst unterliegt ja keiner angesetzten Umrahmung. „C'est l'art qui confère aux choses leur réalité, inexorable, nu, aéré.“<sup>32</sup>

Ein Verschuß? Binding besaß „die schöpferische Kraft, Leben zu zeugen und zu erwecken“.<sup>33</sup> Wenn er von einigen charakterisiert wird als „Ritter, Lehrer, Freund, Sänger, seines und unseres Gottes voll, Deuter, Künder und Bewahrer des Ewigen im Zerfall der Zeitlichkeit, heut wie gestern und morgen wie heut“<sup>34</sup> — von anderen als literarischer Bergsteiger oder Seefahrer, „Gestalter und Bewahrer der überkommenen Güter, Verwalter der Herzen, Bildner der Seelen“ — von anderen wieder als

<sup>30</sup> „Lage der Dichter . . .“, *loc. cit.*, 193 ff.

<sup>31</sup> Emil Belzner, „R. G. Binding. Zum 70. Geburtstage.“ *Neue Rundsch.*, 48. II, Aug. 1937, 203.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Pitrou, „Un champion du non-conformisme.“ *Mercure de France*, vom 15. Aug. 1939, 214.

<sup>33</sup> Rud. A. Schröder, „R. G. Binding. Rede am Sarge.“ *Neue Rundsch.*, Sept. 1938, 49, II, 308.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 309. — <sup>35</sup> O. Heuschele in *Königs. Allg. Ztg.*, 1928, Lit. Beil. 265

Heide sowie tiefgründiger mehr Gedanken- als Stimmungslryiker: eines muß klar bleiben: er war kein Weltflüchtiger und kein Genießer. Er war *Mensch*. Ein Mensch, der „die Fülle des Herzens“ in seiner inneren wohl-dosierten lebenslänglichen Sturm-und-Drang Periode in der Liebe zum hiesigen Dasein aufzubrauchen wußte. So ist auch seine Kunst, die der Heiligkeit des Erlebnisses, der Ganzheit des Daseins, dem „magischen“ Realismus geistigen Lebens gewidmet wurde, das hie und da expressio-nistisch idealisiert, verfeinert und geglättet wird. „Du fandest bei ihm Stolz ohne Hoffart, Kraft ohne Brutalität, Empfindsamkeit ohne Senti-mentalität. — Du lerntest bei ihm Kultur haben.“<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Ernst Penzoldt, *loc. cit.*





## GOETHE IN ENGLISH

E. HEYSE DUMMER

*Elmhurst College*

Few Americans today are familiar with the fact that the most celebrated of the German dramatists, Schiller and Goethe, contributed to the theatre life in this country in the English language. Information concerning Schiller's part in the furtherance of American culture through the medium of the drama has been released just recently.<sup>1</sup> But what Schiller's famed co-worker, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, did in this respect must still be told. Such is the purpose of this study, which for obvious reasons, however, will have to restrict itself in scope. Attention will be focused on one stronghold in the American theatre realm, namely Chicago.

It was the *First Part of Faust* by Goethe that Chicagoans got to know best in their own language. Credit must be given to the Chicago press for its insistence that only the better stage versions of *Faust* be used on the Chicago boards. "Let there be less thunder and electricity, flames and fangs, in the *Faust* representations and more of the actual story as conceived by the German bard," was the request made as early as 1860.<sup>2</sup> It was just that type of play, however, wherewith Chicagoans had to be content for a number of years.

The first record of a *Faust* performance in Chicago in the English language is dated August 10, 1857. In commenting on the proposed venture the *Chicago Daily Democrat* stated: "This is a play of great dramatic power, full of incident and interest. Mr. and Mrs. Conway will no doubt do it full justice."<sup>3</sup> Whether or not the Conways were successful, however, is not revealed in the columns of the press, but nevertheless four additional performances materialized on August 11 and thereafter. The Conways used the popular *Faust* version by Soane.

Unfortunately George Soane's *Faustus* of 1825 had little in common with Goethe's drama even though it may remind one faintly of the *Second Part of Faust*. Gretchen is replaced in Soane's version by Adine who lives unhappily in Venice, where Mephisto takes Faust from atop the Drachenfels. Enrico, her brother, defends the honor of his sister in a duel but succumbs to Faust's blows as does his prototype. It is Rosolia Faust loves rather than Adine. Mephisto is helpful in bringing Rosolia, who is torn from her lover Montolio, to Milan. To satisfy Mephisto, Faust becomes a regicide and as a fugitive again meets the jilted Adine only to die in her arms. Since Adine cannot have the man she loves here on earth, she joins him in death.

If performed by an able company with elaborate scenery, attractive costumes, and effective stage machinery, one can readily see what made Soane's three acts with musical accompaniment popular with theatre audiences of a past day.

<sup>1</sup> Dummer, E. H., "Schiller in English," *Monatshefte für deutschen Unterricht*, Oct. 1943, pp. 334 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, Dec. 21, 1860.

<sup>3</sup> *Chicago Daily Democrat*, Aug. 10, 1857.

In December 1860, theatregoers in Chicago were informed by the press of a forthcoming series of six *Faust* performances by the J. B. Roberts Company. "*Faust* is said to be one of the most effective plays ever produced," reads the announcement devised by the publicity manager of the Roberts Company. "Dramatised from the German of Goethe, it abounds in thrilling situations and wonderful mechanical effects all new to a Chicago audience. The manager has procured the great 'Drummond Light', which will be used to add to the gorgeousness of the tableaux," in which Gretchen ascends to heaven with an angelic escort.<sup>4</sup> The skillful acting of J. B. Roberts as Mephisto and the efficiency of the supporting cast made it possible for the press to state that the piece proved successful from the histrionic point of view.<sup>5</sup>

As to the text employed, however, there was too little of Goethe present, since Roberts used the Wm. Robertson translation of the French adaptation of *Faust* by Michael Carré. What Chicagoans saw in 1860 was a romantic drama suggestive of Goethe's stellar work, populated with Goethean characters as to name but not always as to thought and action. Enlargement of the Siebel rôle and the apotheosis of Marguerite in the above treatment of the *Faust* theme remind one of the opera by Gounod, from which, of course, the name of Carré cannot be divorced.

The *Faust* theme is not heard of again in Chicago until the eighties, but a substitute for the great drama and its adaptations engaged Chicagoans' attention during the late seventies. *Mignon*, a dramatization of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* by James B. Runnion, drew good houses for a number of years. This play, which differs from Goethe's story insofar that Mignon becomes the wife of Wilhelm Meister, was attractive and made to order, as it were, for one of the most popular actresses of the day, Maggie Mitchell. *Mignon's* first season in Chicago, the season from 1876-77, was its best, there being twelve performances on record.<sup>6</sup> As late as 1884, Maggie Mitchell pleased good-sized audiences in Chicago with her charming impersonation of Goethe's immortal character Mignon. Even at this late date Maggie Mitchell seemed not to have lost any of her former vivacity and played the Mignon rôle with much fervor in the opinion of the critic attached to Chicago's leading newspaper of that day.<sup>7</sup>

The year 1886 ushered in a revival of *Faust* in Chicago. Using the adaptation by Bayle Bernard, Lewis Morrison and his company presented *Faust* for two weeks beginning on November 15. One review emphasized the fact that the Bernard adaptation chosen by Morrison did not do full justice to Goethe's drama, and that Morrison as Mephisto lacked subtlety while his colleagues were deficient in one way or another excepting the impersonator of Valentine.<sup>8</sup>

Morrison returned to Chicago with new companies for four more

<sup>4</sup> *Tribune*, Dec. 17, 1860.

<sup>5</sup> *Tribune*, Dec. 21, 1860.

<sup>6</sup> *Tribune*, May 27, 1877.

<sup>7</sup> *Tribune*, Sept. 30, 1884.

<sup>8</sup> *Tribune*, Nov. 16, 1886.

engagements in the following years. Whether in 1888 Morrison utilized the special version of *Faust* prepared for him by Dr. Gustavus Haas of New York is difficult to say, since no reference to authorship of the script appears in the announcements or reviews.<sup>9</sup> Irregardless of what stage version Morrison used in these appearances, he and his company had to be satisfied with the smallest morsels of praise from the critics. Despite the critics, however, Morrison always played to fair houses.

Morrison's script prepared by Bayle Bernard in 1866 gave major attention to the Gretchen tragedy like most of the adaptations. The story is contained in the following four acts written in blank verse: Act I: Faust's Study and Laboratory Overlooking the Great Square. Act II, Sc. 1: Grand Plaza of a German City; Sc. 2: Margaret's Bedroom; Sc. 3: Martha's Garden. Act III, Sc. 1: The City Fountain; Sc. 2: The Ascent of the Brocken; Sc. 3: The Summit of the Brocken on Walpurgis Night. Act IV, Sc. 1: Street of the Cathedral; Sc. 2: The City Walls; Sc. 3: Interior of a Prison; Sc. 4: The Emyrean and Ascent of Margaret.

With Lewis Morrison there came to the English stage of Chicago a *Faust* version which was decidedly more Goethean as to the actual story than others used in Chicago before 1866. But this play also had its shortcomings. Thus Mephisto, rather than Faust, emerges as the central figure in Bernard's version. Gretchen lacks the charm and stability where-with Goethe endowed her and Faust is reduced to a rogue. The comedy element, especially in the Mephisto-Martha scenes, descends to a low level. However, these locations were designed to draw as many laughs as possible. This they did and probably helped in no small measure to give the lease of life to an otherwise laugh-barren play as did also the brilliant tableaux picturing the apotheosis.

More successful than Morrison in the opinion of the press was John Griffith, the Shakesperian actor. Chicagoans witnessed thirty-two performances of *Faust* by the John Griffith Company in 1894 and 1896. Speaking of Griffith's debut in *Faust*, the *Chicago Tribune* recorded that the young actor made a favorable impression as Mephisto in the Henry Irving version of Goethe's masterpiece. According to the review, Griffith's acting was praiseworthy although not free of crudities. The interpretation showed "understanding for the German poet's forcibly dramatic and finely imaginative creation." Griffith did not "degrade Mephisto to a buffoon with a red mantle, but he restored the rôle to its moving force with considerable artistic skill." A "gentle and sympathetic" Margaret and a "generally acceptable" Faust played opposite Mephisto, who later encountered an "overdemonstrative" Martha and an "unduly melodramatic" Valentine. Scenically the production was ambitious, but the stage lighting could have been improved.<sup>10</sup>

Sir Henry Irving's adaptation of *Faust* comes closer to the German

<sup>9</sup> Very informative is Professor Raschen's study of the various *Faust* versions used by Morrison. Cf. J. F. L. Raschen, "Lewis Morrison's Productions of Goethe's *Faust*," *Germanic Review*, IV (1929). 107 ff.

<sup>10</sup> *Tribune*, Sept. 17, 1894.

original than any other script used on the Chicago stage up until 1886. What Irving, the producer, looked after most of all, however, was effect. Consequently the magic rather than the humanity of the story receives priority rating. Despite this shift in emphasis it is heartening to note that through the Irving *Faust*, although it did not possess the merit e. g. of Otto Devrient's German version (1876), Chicagoans were brought closer to Goethe than ever before.

Irving's production of *Faust* had the following arrangement: Prologue: Faust's Study. Nuremberg, Lorenz Platz. Act I: Margaret's Chamber; the City Wall; Martha's House; Martha's Garden. Act II: Trees and Mountains; Margaret's Garden. Act III: Nuremberg, Street by Church. Act IV: Atop the Brocken. Act V: A Dungeon in Nuremberg. Blank verse was used for the larger part of the adaptation.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, *Faust* was taken over by numerous stock companies, some good, some mediocre. One of the best readings ever given Goethe's famous dramatic poem by a stock company in Chicago occurred during the week of May 18, 1902. All members of the cast played their parts in a fashion worthy of commendation. The critics were especially enthusiastic over the expertness of Mr. Maurice Freeman, leading man of the Columbia Theatre Stock Company, in the rôle of Mephisto. Cognizance was taken of the fact that Freeman avoided the usual mistake of emphasizing too strongly the satanic character of the part, thereby reducing it to a farce comedy character.<sup>11</sup>

The *Second Part* of *Faust* never reached the footlights in Chicago, although sections from it were incorporated in an adaptation staged in 1936 at the Great Northern Theatre.<sup>12</sup> For four weeks the Federal Theatre Unit No. 1 of Chicago performed a modernized version of Goethe's *Faust* written and staged by Justus Schifferes and Robert Breen. In the 1936 *Faust*, Augsburg and the court of Maximilian became Washington and the Roosevelt administration. The critic of the *Chicago Daily News* thought it capital that the authors of the new *Faust* should poke satiric fun at New Deal politics and social conditions as they existed at that time, conditions which among other things brought about the Federal Theatre Unit. He, however, did not think that the satire of Schifferes and Breen was nearly so deadly as Dean Swift's variety had been several centuries ago. According to this critic, the play possessed vigor and vitality despite its crudeness, unevenness, and amateurishness. It was thought to follow Goethe's original story closely enough; however, since elements that were "topical" were introduced, "the play was robbed of the dull tedium of a classic" (*sic!*). The main complaint of the expert representing the *Daily News* was that the authors did not have "the

<sup>11</sup> *Tribune*, May 19, 1902.

<sup>12</sup> It was never attempted on the Chicago German stage either according to the comprehensive investigation by Esther Marie Olson: "The German Theater in Chicago," *German-American Historical Review*, Chicago, 1937, pp. 68 ff.



genius to sustain the modern spirit, or at least to fuse it nearly with the spirit of Goethe." The staging was considered weirdly effective.<sup>13</sup>

The critic of the *Chicago Tribune* dismissed the venture by calling it a "dwindling affair which runs toward the decadent side of amateurism in all of its phases." What irked him most, however, in what he called "an example of low-grade collegiate eccentricity," was the ever talking Mephistopheles, played by co-author Breen.<sup>14</sup>

As to the other principals of the cast, Margaret was as modern in her maidenly charm as Merle Oberon of the screen, Martha used the technique of Mae West, and Faust reminded one of the genius of Emil Jannings.

It will have been noticed that the play bills of the legitimate stage in Chicago never carried Goethe's *Egmont* and *Iphigenie*, dramas presented very often on the German stage of Chicago.<sup>15</sup> To be sure, there is a record of three performances of *Iphigenie in Tauris*, which materialized in 1912 and 1914 under the auspices of The Chicago Theatre Society. The performing company, however, was not a part of the professional stage and evoked no comment from the Chicago critics.

To try to account for the failure of Goethe's *Iphigenie* to appear on the legitimate stage of Chicago is as difficult as to find the reason for the absence of the *Egmont* drama. Frequent renditions of the great *Egmont Overture* by Beethoven in the concert halls of Chicago and notices about the repeated success of the drama on the German stage apparently were insufficient to engender a stage production of it in English. It need not be dwelt upon how much Goethe's *Egmont* and *Iphigenie* would have enhanced the repertoire and how these creations would have made some of the very lean theatre seasons in Chicago, whereof the record tells, definitely more worth while.

It is regrettable that the appearance of *Faust* in an acceptable English version was so long delayed in Chicago. Nevertheless the earlier adaptations served at least to keep Goethe's famous trio, Faust, Mephisto, and Gretchen, and the name of the illustrious playwright before the theatre public. Schiller, as was shown in a previous study,<sup>16</sup> had an earlier start in Chicago on the English stage but Goethe's name remained longer on the playbills. The statistics also show that as to the actual number of performances Schiller's four plays<sup>17</sup> were outdistanced by *Faust* alone. But regardless of whether Goethe or Schiller fared better qualitatively or quantitatively, we may believe that in Chicago the eloquent phrase came to be "Sie waren unser."

<sup>13</sup> *Chicago Daily News*, April 1, 1936.

<sup>14</sup> *Tribune*, April 1, 1936.

<sup>15</sup> Other plays by Goethe done in German were *Tasso*, *Clavigo*, *Die Geschwister*, and, of course, *Faust*, which was presented practically every season. Olson, *op. cit.*, p. 75 ff.

<sup>16</sup> Dummer, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

<sup>17</sup> *The Robbers*, *William Tell*, *Maria Stuart*, *Don Carlos*.

## GERMAN LITERATURE: A PHYSIOGNOMY \*

HELMUT REHDER  
*University of Wisconsin*

### III. Ways of Poets and Thinkers.

On the popular level, German literature shows trends and standards which are *mutatis mutandis* comparable to those of any other nation. When we turn to the "classics", i. e. those writings which are cherished as lasting possessions of the nation, certain features stand out as specifically and distinctively German. To many Germans these features are symbols of their "geistige Kultur"; and since they are often proclaimed with almost evangelistic zeal, their scrutiny might permit an insight into the traditional ideals and aspirations of the Germans.

I. This "golden treasury" of living literature — (and the concept of a "golden treasury" is indicative of the educated middle-class) — is the cumulative product of the last two hundred years. After a period of slow and steady growth, it took shape toward the end of the 18th century, reached a climax during the first half of the 19th century, and has influenced creative writing ever since by setting standards of measurement which could be adhered to or defied, but not disregarded. At any rate, every literary trend or school of the last hundred years has vied with the "classics" in its own way, and rarely has a modern writer escaped the fate of being held up for comparison, at least indirectly, with the "Großen" or, if he was eminent, with the "ganz Großen". The significance of this body of literature lies in the intensity with which it has cast problems of human life into symbolic forms. Not their subject-matter, but their way of interpreting life has made these masterworks popular with the Germans. In many respects they view reality and life, not as they are, but as they should be; and where the present proves unedifying, they aim at ideal and perennial standards of human behavior. This treasury of literature, in brief, is the medium in which many leading concepts and ideologies of the Germans have been formulated and preserved.

An example of this function of German literature is the concept of the "Third Reich". To the rational mind, the Empire of 1871 may appear as the first, the Republic as the second, the Nazi state as the third "Reich"; and since (after 1923) the book of MOELLER VAN DEN BRUCK, *Das Dritte Reich*, contributed greatly toward the growth of the Nazi sentiment, the slogan is generally credited to the Nazis themselves. Actually the concept, if not the slogan, is much older. It is traceable to the philosophers and poets of the classical age, to HEGEL's, SCHELLING's or SCHILLER's thoughts on the nature of history, to NOVALIS' visions of European history, to HERDER's treatise on the evolution of mankind, or to LESSING's remarkable philosophical essay, *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (The Education of the Human Race). Although of even much older origin, it appeared in the 18th century as a metaphysical way of presenting the

\* Continued from *Monatshefte*, April 1944.

idea of evolution. It has been pointed out how, during that century, German literature gradually emancipated itself from theological traditions; but in regard to historical evolution it retained the old Christian doctrine of the three ages of the world, according to which man, having lost the primeval state of perfection, could hope to attain it again after having gone through an age of privation. This image of past, present, and future appears in manifold variations in the thoughts of the time and has ultimately no meaning beyond the vague hope for human perfection in some distant future. Like many other theological or metaphysical concepts, such a formula suggested the belief in finality, unity, and completion. When it became expedient to exploit such a belief, the Nazis readily seized upon the concept dormant in the idealistic literature of Germany and translated what was meant as an abstract, intangible symbol into the calculated promise of tangible reality.

This example may illustrate the peculiar significance that is attached to literature aside from the function of diversion and escape. It is expected to be thought-provoking and inciting in terms of ultimate ends rather than of immediate action. Scarcely any other ideal expresses this aim better than that of "Bildung" (culture) of the individual.

The meaning of "Bildung" may be contrasted with the concept of "education". Education is the process of conducting man from the state of primitive doltishness into higher knowledge, that he might master the forces of nature and thereby attain the greatest possible advantage for all men. It is the development of the power of reasoning for practical purposes. The result is: man is, at the end of the "educational" process, vastly different from and superior to man at the beginning. "Bildung", on the other hand, contains the idea of human development not in contrast to but in conjunction with the natural talents. The German word "Bildung" has two connotations: it signifies "formation" in the sense in which natural objects have their forms; it signifies also "formation" in the sense of artistic creativeness. "Bildung", then, is the process of refinement, the shaping of natural talents into characters. The result is: man is, at the outcome, not different from man at the beginning; he is the same being, but vastly modified.

Obviously, this concept of "Bildung" belongs in the sphere of pedagogy. Other literatures held this view of cultural enlightenment during the 18th century; German literature has held on to it most tenaciously, well into recent times.

SCHILLER regarded the stage, and for that matter all dramatic literature, as a "moralische Anstalt" (moral institution). His dramas, though historical in subject and setting, are bent on "ethische Bildung" (ethical refinement) of the individual and of man, symbolically portrayed in the development of his characters, and full of potential effect on the present and future conduct of his spectators.

Similarly, the two major works of GOETHE, his dramatic poem *Faust* and his novel *Wilhelm Meister*, are intent upon the ethical evolution of

human character. They have formulated this problem so emphatically that no major novel in the century following Goethe's death (1832) could escape the basic postulates of Goethe's ideology. Here some human beings are characterized who, gifted with valuable talents, are constantly placed in situations which force them to moderate their ambitions and to subject them to the ways and demands of the world of reality. When they finally emerge from this trying process of self-limitation, they have in no way lost or sacrificed their individuality or their "freedom". Rather they have enhanced it by accepting the "challenge of the day": to acquire their spiritual independence "every day anew".

Almost any literary product conveys a "moral" of some sort. The element of philosophical indoctrination in the German classics aims at more than that. It distinctly and explicitly makes the claim of influencing, guiding, educating the reader in order to make him see "a deeper significance" in life. Such a tradition insists on searching for problems in life where possibly there are none, so that the hard and cold understanding of reality is often sacrificed in favor of the cultivation of the "personality". The interest in the outside world, in the fortuitous events of daily life, extends only so far as they contribute toward the shaping of the individual, his consciousness, and his character. Therefore, this literary tradition is reluctant to accept chance as a determinant factor in the life of man; wherever it occurs it is considered, like the material world, a challenge for continued search of clarity and "meaning". This is the peculiar pattern of the "Bildungsroman" (educational novel) which has become one of the major categories of fictional prose in Germany. Within our time, TH. MANN's celebrated *Zauberberg* (Magic Mountain) represents this familiar set-up, now projected into the social and intellectual situation of Europe preceding World War I.

GOETHE's novel *Wilhelm Meister*, — in which the hero goes through life as "apprentice" and "journeyman" in order to emerge as what was implied in his name, as "master", — is one striking example for the basic assumption that all existence is in a state of constant flux. The Germans like to call this "das Werden" (becoming or self-development) which reflects, in the human world, the same process of evolution and sublimation which reigns in the biological realm of nature. The theme, "Werde der du bist" (Develop into what you basically are and what you are meant to be) may vindicate the emphasis on striving and restless activity which inspires GOETHE's *Faust* and many another work of 19th century literature. Like the idea of progress which has been immanent in the course of American civilization, it springs from an essential affirmation of life and from the confidence in the basic nature of man. But what has developed as a practical and democratic ideal on this side of the ocean, has remained an aesthetic and individualistic challenge on the other. In German literature the problem of social adjustment has been the objective of "Bildung" only through the appeal to the conscience, to the good will of the individual, rarely as a demand of reality.



From its origin in the 18th century modern German literature still bears three characteristic marks which, throughout the subsequent epochs, have represented its standards of quality. They are: 1. Literature must be art; 2. Literature must show man in his highest struggle, that for freedom; 3. Literature must reflect, not only life, but "Geist". In other words, to the educated German, literature is expected to fulfil an aesthetic, an ethical, and a metaphysical requirement.

1. In the later 18th century such German poets as LESSING, HERDER, and GOETHE turned violently against French civilization, or at least what they considered French civilization to be. They charged that French literature had become "society" literature, had ceased to be natural, and had become artificial. We know that their reaction was not so much political as cultural, since it was directed against the prevailing system of absolutism, rationalism, and materialism; and besides, they had such Frenchmen as ROUSSEAU and DIDEROT on their side. Some of their viewpoints are still familiar: Literature is the result of emotional experience, not of learning and knowledge. It is not a product, but an inspiration. A poet is born, not made. Poetry springs from the people, not from the ranks of society. It is a simple, natural expression of man's real experience, not a description of his learning or sophistication. In consequence of such a negative, intensely emotional reaction, the ideal type of the "Genie" (genius) became the positive standard of the age. A "Genie" was a creative talent that could transmit, to others, human experiences in a manner that made them appear natural and real. Shakespeare was such a "Genie"; Voltaire was not. Thus, the standard of literature was shifted from stylistic perfection to creative imagination, or "art". Art was considered the climax of human occupation, the last step in the intellectual enterprise; creative, it not only apprehends reality, it "makes" it. It is in this sphere that we must look for the origin of the German shibboleths of "Bildung" and "Bildende Kunst" (formative art), which stress creativeness and originality of the individual, sometimes even at the expense of social adjustment. Most of the German "Bildungsromane" deal with artists who are ushered through various spheres of life; each experience contributes toward the molding of their characters; and although many of them fail as artists, they at least come to regard their life as a "Kunstwerk", a harmoniously integrated whole. Even Faust, although not an artist, finds final justification in creative activity, not for himself, but for others. Goethe himself has been extolled as the "artist of life": the poet, the sage, the scholar who succeeded in welding the contrasts of his life into a mode of organic, serene existence. It need not be emphasized that much of the peculiar German fascination for such ideals as "Ganzheit" (totality) may be traced to this literary tribute to art.

Much of this aesthetic perspective was brought about by the rediscovery and interpretation of ancient Greek civilization by WINCKELMANN (middle of 18th century). Greek art became an ideal and a guide, not only for archeologists and art admirers, but for educators and poets as

well: here was a primitive, natural people which had produced master-works of art and beauty. What was more natural than to make "nature" responsible for these creations? Under these premises, art and nature are identical. According to Goethe's and Schiller's assertions, the most "educated" man is, at the same time, the most natural; and vice versa, the most natural creation is the most artistic. What might appear to be a mere play with words is, at this point, supported by the traditional and sentimental affection of the Germans for "nature"; for them, nature is both an image of totality and a realm for physical escape and regeneration. As such it plays a dominant role in the works of the many lyrical poets whom Germany has produced.

Lyrics, as the art of the natural, has always found a warm reception in Germany. Not only has the colorful folksong literature furnished repeated inspiration for lyrical poems, but many poets themselves are remembered as authors of genuine folksongs (HEINE, EICHENDORFF, UHLAND, W. MUELLER, CLAUDIUS). For all of them nature is the emotional background reflecting and healing human passions: for GOETHE with his astonishingly intimate sensitiveness for natural events, for EICHENDORFF with his images of dreamy and devout surrender, for HEINE with his delicate sentiment and scepticism, for MÖRIKE and STORM with their melancholy resignation. From HÖLDERLIN who, like Keats, built up an ideal world for a lacerated soul, down to such modern poets as HOFMANNSTHAL and RILKE, nature is synonymous with existence, attracting and absorbing the individual whose only wish is "to become one with things". Finally, one poet should be mentioned who has had considerable influence upon modern German ideologies: STEFAN GEORGE. In his poems, the poet assumes the role of a prophet who, like Hegel, claims to have insight into the mysteries of fate and time. For George, a poet is the creator of "myths", of doctrines, who has to point out new horizons to his time; who has to rally youth around him and instil new faith in the sceptics. More than any other modern poet, he has contributed toward the emulation of the concept of the "leader". Although he proclaimed beauty as bearing ethical responsibility, George lost the touch of the natural by withdrawing into reserve, brevity, and austere grandeur.

With such a pose, the artistic implication of literature has reached an extreme. Poetry has become "art for art's sake". This situation may be observed in the customary German distinction between a "Dichter" (poet) and a "Schriftsteller" (writer). There is more implied in this distinction than the ordinary difference between elevated poetic style and sober prose. In this view, a "Dichter" is different from other human beings, especially from the bourgeois or the "Philistine". He is an exceptional human being, an "artist", a free and self-contained master of himself, responsible only to himself and to the "message" that he has to proclaim, even though a gap of misunderstanding might separate him from the "people" for whom he claims to be writing and for whom he secretly feels contempt (cf. TH. MANN's *Tonio Kröger*).

At this point the demand that literature be "art" reveals the artistic individual to be indifferent toward matters of every-day life. Yet SCHILLER's intensely serious essay on the nature of the democratic state is entitled, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*. For him the understanding of art is preliminary to the understanding of man; therefore, art should be considered the most appropriate means for preparing man for the enjoyment of liberty among his fellow-men. To raise man to the stage where he is capable of appreciating art is to make a more "gebildet" human being out of him who is less susceptible to the changing fortunes of the day. Provided the will for the absolute exists in man, he can detach himself from material wants and desires. Where material need can be argued away it can, like poverty, even be glorified. Throughout the 19th century Schiller's view of the ennobling sacrifice was a basic principle in the educational philosophy of the German school system. As recently as 1919, a writer like THOMAS MANN struggled conscientiously with this problem in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (Reflections of a Non-Political Man), one of the most unreserved self-confessions written by any German. The non-political man, — that was the artist who in his fervor for absolutes had lost contact with the practical, political world around him, while he was absorbed in the realm of beauty and art.

2. The second implication of cultural literature is the ethical: literature must show man in his highest struggle, the struggle for freedom. Much has been said about the influence of the ethics of KANT upon the German bourgeoisie, and about the adoption of the "Categorical Imperative" by the bureaucracy of Prussia. When a society accepts a code of behavior such as demands that man act according to principles rather than personal motives, it must at least have been prepared for it by its own traditions. When Kant promised freedom and justice to him who acted so "that the principle of his actions would be valid for all people alike", he expressed what had been implied in the religious (specifically, in the Protestant) concept of conscience. The same ethical conviction is displayed in the German classical drama. On the other hand, Kantian ethics would scarcely have been so widely assimilated in manifold modifications without the dramas and essays of SCHILLER, a confessed disciple of the "sage of Königsberg".

It is significant that all of Schiller's dramas deal with the struggle for freedom, whether it is waged by an individual, by a class, or by a nation. The motto that he set on the title-page of his first drama, "In tyrannos", earned him the title of honorary citizen of the French Revolution. His last drama, *Wilhelm Tell*, has become a national play of the Swiss. In all of his dramas the attainment of liberty is made dependent upon the surrender of the individual to the idea of duty and responsibility. Schiller's name ranks with that of any great liberator of the 18th century. His significance rests with his definition of freedom; he advocates, to be sure, the freedom *from* want and oppression; but he is more deeply concerned with the freedom *to choose* one's own law, the principle of self-limitation.

For many Germans Schiller's work is synonymous with emulation of heroism, which accepts suffering and guilt for the sake of spiritual independence. Of spiritual independence only; for little material independence and prosperity was granted the Germans of Schiller's time, and much of the heroism which he proclaimed with sublime feeling for the absolute derives from the fear, insecurity, and political frustration which deprived the Germans of their prospects of self-government. Schiller's dramas are basically political in temperament; in a world of petty intrigues, decentralized interests, and public inertia they express the will to action. But their influence, while blocked in the political sphere, extended into the cultural sphere of the "aesthetic education of man" (*Bildung*). Of all classical writers, Schiller may truly be called the most popular in Germany, the one whose concise and assuring phrases have the most familiar ring to the German public. It is true that his works have a strongly doctrinal and moralizing appeal, — to such an extent that he may be abhorred by the unhappy pupils who have to write themes about him. It is also true that the seriousness of his oratorical pathos may be alien to modern ears. But the implications of his psychological and philosophical thought still carry a vital challenge to a modern intellect, — as Thomas Mann may testify.

Schiller is only the first representative of a continuous tradition of tragedy on the German stage. To mention but a few names, he is followed by such poets as KLEIST, GRILLPARZER, HEBBEL, WAGNER. And if the widely ramified influence of SCHOPENHAUER's philosophy of pessimism during the later 19th century is taken into consideration the significance of such a tradition for the German way of thinking may be realized. It is peculiar that even with the growth of material prosperity, the pessimistic outlook became increasingly common in literary Germany. All of these poets present variations on the same theme. In Schiller's works, man is involved in tragedy because he aims too high with his hopes and schemes; in Kleist's dramas, man's fate is tragic because he is confined to the limitations of his nature and mind; in Grillparzer, man's own passions are in his way. For Hebbel, tragedy results when man, as an individual, is confronted with the greater institutions of mankind, society or state. Finally, for Wagner there is no way out of the tragic dilemma: man, as an individual and an intellect, breaks apart under the impact of traditions and instincts. Most of these dramas have one common denominator: the belief that man is hemmed in by a hostile world. By daring to live according to his own will he is involved in guilt, and even the grandeur of possible heroism does not absolve him from personal sacrifice. If he is to avoid tragedy he must submit to the demands of reason which impose themselves upon him in such forms as State, Law, or Mankind. Thus, the German drama has repeatedly created those stern characters who, peculiarly fascinated by an abstract principle, invite their own destruction and inflict injustices upon others. It is scarcely surprising, then, that through such a tradition of tragedy, almost more than through political reality



itself, the Germans have become prone to accept the notion of the precedence of the state over the individual.

But there is an even more significant feature of German tragedy than its bias for absolute principles: its heroes frequently fail to establish genuine understanding between themselves and the world surrounding them. Obsessed by an idea, they are reluctant to accept reality as they meet it. They expect surrender and loyalty, and are thrown out of balance when they find "masks" or "mistrust" instead, which might, after all, be mere forms of self-protection on the part of other individuals exactly like them. The result is a feeling of broken confidence, of melancholy and despair, such as has found expression in German literature from GOETHE'S *Werther* to THOMAS MANN'S *Tonio Kröger*. On the surface, this feeling might be attributed to the mood and the style of sentimental "Weltschmerz" as it prevailed also in other European literatures in the 18th and the early decades of the 19th century. Actually it seems to lay bare the very nucleus of individualism itself: being an individual is synonymous with having lost communion with other human beings. To regain it or to escape the fear of loneliness and isolation, poetry turns to the glorification of yearning, of love and death, or similar metaphysical concepts in which the tension of the individual is resolved. In this regard, the ideal of "Gemeinschaft" (community) has played a dominant rôle in German literature; in contrast to "Gesellschaft" (society organized along material lines) it represents the romantic concept of an ideal society composed of individuals with equal privileges and responsibilities. Based on faith and conviction, rather than on practical analysis, it continues, in a way, the ancient ideal of the Christian "congregatio" to which the individual has renounced his ambitions.

Self-discipline and self-sacrifice is the counterpart to the aesthetic way of life, where the enjoyment of one's emotions is the goal. In both ways, German literature, like the German temperament, has tended to extremes: the enjoyment of the beautiful may turn into "Gemütlichkeit", vapid sentimentality; the feeling for tragedy is often exaggerated into the empty pose of the heroic. It is striking that German literature is largely lacking that very element which would temper both artistic and heroic conceit: the element of humor which provides for an atmosphere of balance and freedom. To be sure, comedies, satires, light-winged verse can be found in German literature as elsewhere, and particularly the romantic movement was extravagant in the cultivation of the ironic temper. But that only indicates that even humor is taken with a certain degree of seriousness, as the drug that makes the tragic bearable. Even the most highly esteemed comedies, those of LESSING and KLEIST, the quaint novels of JEAN PAUL F. RICHTER, the "novellen" of G. KELLER, or the witticisms of HEINE, do not make the reader fully forget himself, but suggest to him the pathetic insufficiency of man. Only rarely does German literature throw off its dignity to offer wholesome relief, to become light-hearted without being frivolous or sarcastic. Such liberating sense of humor is

found in the entertainment of the day, on the popular stages, in the suburban theatres, in recreational reading matter, and above all in the unpretentious dialect literature of almost every region of Germany (e. g. FRITZ REUTER's Low German writings), that is, wherever the experiences of life are expressed before they have become intellectual issues. It is also found in such rare authors as WILHELM BUSCH or CHRISTIAN MORGENSTERN, who have accepted the paradoxical and absurd situations of life, who can laugh at themselves and enable others to do the same.

3. The third aspect of cultural literature is frequently talked about, but difficult to define: the requirement that it reflect "Geist". One of the most ambiguous abstractions in German literature, it is often cited by Germans with considerable pride. What a translator might scarcely express in such a series of terms as mind, spirit, intellect, character, ideal, a German may say with one sweeping gesture, "Geist". For practical purposes, it may be interpreted as "the outlook from a superior point of view." Ever since the days of ERASMUS the leaders of literature have been those sage men who in noble resignation withdrew to the sanctum of their "museum", to devote themselves to contemplation of existence and to pronounce, from time to time, their verdict on the ways and aims of the world. Much of this humanistic temper has been preserved in the literature of German classicism, primarily in the works of LESSING and HERDER. Through their penetrating criticism — and both were essentially critics — they contributed decisively toward raising the reading public of the 18th century to the level of intellectual maturity and honesty. Their aim was to judge literary products, not from the level of personal interest, but from the effect they are meant to produce and from the history that has produced them. Absorbed in the effort to do justice to human accomplishments, they combated prejudice and championed tolerance, objectivity, and will to understand. The outstanding product of such efforts is e. g. LESSING's celebrated *Nathan der Weise*. As Lessing put it: if he were offered the alternative between knowledge of truth and search for truth, he would choose the latter. This conviction of boundless striving for understanding, this effort to grasp the "Wesen" of things and thereby overcome the feeling of human insufficiency, pervades, as the recurring theme, much of the literature of German classicism and romanticism. It forms the basis for Herder's attempt to characterize nations by their particular history or "Geist"; it marks the ambition of the romanticists to reconstruct the peculiar atmosphere of the Middle Ages; it sets the task of GOETHE's *Faust* to comprehend the meaning and mission of man, or the intent of Goethe's scientific writings to define the phenomena of nature in terms of their evolution and function. Yet, while such a mental attitude, tempered by scepticism, is likely to produce a good deal of restlessness and intellectual curiosity, it is also subject to the dangers of self-delusion. To understand all is to condone all. The thinker who is engaged in the contemplation of everlasting values may, in doing so, have lost the touch of practical issues and the readiness for decisive and neces-

sary action. Even Goethe who, more than any other poet, stressed the "demand of the day" could submerge himself in the study of ancient oriental lore when his immediate present was resounding with political strife. Obviously, the ideal of "Geist" is quite indispensable to the Germans, as the frequent occurrence of such expressions as "geistiger Mensch, geistige Arbeit, Geist der Goethezeit, Geist der Musik, Volksgeist, Zeitgeist" may indicate. If GOETHE's *Faust* enjoys universal esteem, its significance rests neither with the content nor with the style of the work alone, but with the message that pervades the entire poem down to its smallest parts, and with the degree to which it has made fundamental human experiences communicable to modern man. "Geist", then, is not so much knowledge as a standard of values that compels a reader to come to grips with the challenge of a work of art. It is the effort on his part to distinguish and to synthesize the manifold and contradictory impressions of life and to absorb them into a unified outlook of the whole. Like the first two postulates of literature, "Geist" implies that the reader is reminded to view life from a universal vantage point, "sub specie aeterni". Schiller expressed this thought in an epigram which can equally well be applied to the artistic as to the social pursuits of the individual:

Immer strebe zum Ganzen, und kannst du selber kein Ganzes  
Werden, als dienendes Glied schließ an ein Ganzes dich an!

(Always aspire to completion. And if you cannot attain completion yourself, quietly submit, as a usefully serving member, to that which itself does exist as a whole).

II. The literary trend toward "cultural" objectives maintained its sway well through the 19th century. In the 20th century it was still cultivated, primarily by stage and school, although it was challenged by another trend which had been in the making since the days of the industrial revolution. This second trend does not aspire to be educational, but rather expresses the burning issues of the day, making its reader aware of the world they are living in rather than the one they are wishing for. With the growth of the metropolitan areas and the increasing complication of the social process, literature now begins to reflect the shift from individualistic to social consciousness. In this development the ethical theme of "character" is gradually replaced by that of social milieu or biological conditions, and aesthetic considerations begin to yield to psychological interests.

1. The social problem is, naturally, intimately connected with the modern metropolis. Where masses accumulate, human interest is more concerned with the social adjustment than with the "Bildung" of the individual. Since Germany was never completely centralized, the individualistic aspect could still be perpetuated on the background of the slower and smaller provincial city. But for the larger cities and their portrayal in literature, the novels of ZOLA and FLAUBERT furnished models for a new, deterministic approach. The human characters which now ap-

pear on the stage of literature are no longer examples of the cultivation of the "self"; they have become "representatives" of the society that produced them. The writers themselves no longer feel called upon to advocate mere "understanding" of life, since understanding alone does not bring about an improvement of living conditions. They demonstrate and explain, they commiserate or accuse; but they do not pretend to seek "a deeper significance" in life, as long as the very foundations of social existence are insecure. To be sure, the material prosperity of the Bismarck empire, the advancement of science and engineering, the progress in social legislation had made many people richer, more powerful, more learned, or better protected, but they had not brought man any closer to the realization of the ideals of beauty, freedom, and truth envisaged by the humanistic age. Just as GOETHE may serve as the exponent of that older phase of idealism, NIETZSCHE is to be considered the main representative of the new phase of naturalism and scepticism.

NIETZSCHE, himself rooted in the romantic traditions of the 19th century, criticized the sated civilization of the Hohenzollern empire: "Es bezahlt sich teuer, zur Macht zu kommen, — Macht verdummt" (Power is bought dearly, — power stultifies). Free initiative, championed by the idealists, had turned into bureaucracy; the ideal of individual self-development had become the formal program of educational institutions; "Bildung" had been assigned as a task to officials. For them Nietzsche coined the phrase, "Bildungsphilister" (Culture Philistines). Under such circumstances, literature became largely satirical or, wherever it envisaged ideal aims, sentimental. Extremely observant of the meaningful detail, it fulfilled its purpose in the criticism of current uses and abuses. However, it had lost the common standard of measurement, as it had been held by the writers of the humanistic age, and criticism depended on whatever ideological, social, political point of view a writer happened to have adopted. Thus, writers with such disparate opinions and aims as LINDAU, CONRAD, SUDERMANN, VIEBIG, GERHART HAUPTMANN, HEINRICH MANN, agree in their sympathies for underprivileged society, its limitations, and its futile struggle for freedom. It is interesting to observe how in many cases the concern for the lower classes is motivated by sentimental commiseration from above rather than by the genuine understanding of the social situation itself. Searching for an ultimate justification of their viewpoint, these writers are still tempted by and frequently succumb to the idealizing perspectives of romanticism. The reason is fairly obvious. In the alternative between individualistic ambitions and social demands, between the desire to be original and the necessity of submitting to the bounds of a class, two prototypes have emerged which compete for the privilege of "influencing" the masses: the artist and the political man. Both have ultimate ends in mind: the one espouses the power of ideas, the other the idea of power. In modern literature the artist is compelled to share in the issues of the day if he hopes his ideas to be heard. In this connection the two journals, *Kladderadatsch* and *Simplicissimus*, expressed the new



function of the artist; they afforded him the opportunity to display his satirical wit in the political and cultural field. THOMAS MANN, too, first attained literary fame in the domain of social analysis and criticism when he portrayed, in his *Buddenbrooks*, the decay of a family from the plane of the substantial security of the bourgeois to the refined but uprooted existence of the artist. In this novel there was "development", too, — not upward and onward, as in the older and idealistic novels, but sideways and downward and tinged with the aura of Schopenhauer's pessimism. It concludes with the realization that, in modern times, cultural independence of the individual can be acquired only at the expense of material and spiritual security. Similar downward trends appear in the novels of FONTANE, depicting the disintegration of formerly leading social circles. If this trend has been called "decadence", it is by no means to be interpreted as moral inferiority, but rather as the insufficiency of the old cherished ideal of "Bildung" in the face of modern living and its realities. The former ideals of literature were, somehow, unmasked as fallacious: Thomas Mann's figure of Tonio Kröger has attained freedom, art, "Geist"; but he has also become isolated from his fellow-men. "Geist", once an ideal and a stimulating force, has become discredited as a burden, a sickness, a pathological condition which is marked for destruction. The healthy will escape its neurotic sensitiveness and survive, for they are robust, unconcerned, "ungeistig", and attached, above all else, to life. In this solution one must recognize the implications of Nietzsche's challenge in *Beyond Good and Evil*, and Thomas Mann has confessed to being a genuine disciple of Nietzsche.

According to Nietzsche, all ultimate values stem from the belief in the existence of another world behind this real world. Goethe, in his old age, resigned himself to the boundaries of the world of practical enterprise:

"Nach drüben ist die Aussicht uns verrannt;  
Tor, wer dorthin die Augen blinzelnd richtet,  
Sich über Wolken seinesgleichen dichtet."

(The prospect to the world beyond is blocked;  
Fool he who yearns and thither strains his eyes  
And fancies, over clouds, the likes of him.)

For Nietzsche all such values as Good and Evil are human fictions, employed by man to justify his actions. To him the only ultimate reality is life itself, the will to exist, which precedes all pretensions to genius or culture. Thus, the only alternative with which man is fundamentally confronted is that of existence vs. non-existence, and that alternative is beyond good and evil. If Tonio Kröger, in Mann's story, has embraced art, freedom, idea, he has given himself to a fiction and lost his foothold in life.

In such a perspective of doubt and nihilism, "Bildung" has lost its ultimate significance. For it is no longer "personality" but mass which is the form of daily human existence, as e. g. in the drama of ERNST TOL-

LER, *Masse Mensch*, or in the difficult novel of ALFRED DOEBLIN, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. "Bildung" is always instilled "from above", as it were, from the point of view of the older generation. As to the outlook of the younger generation itself, German literature again presents a unique picture. Compared with other literatures, the number of German novels dealing with the manifold problems of youth and the young generation is amazing. Such problems, to be sure, include delinquency and erotic complexities; but all age-groups possess those. Youth is primarily affected by the ideological conflict between the generations, by the difference of values which reflect the different objectives in the struggle of existence. A historical survey of German literature shows that, from time to time, as literature grew stale under one aesthetic regime, a group of young and congenial minds set up new aims. Thus it happened around 1770 with the Storm and Stress Movement with Goethe as its leader, thus around 1830 with the movement of Young Germany to which Heine lent stature and form, thus again around 1890 in the movement of Naturalism with Nietzsche as its intellectual protagonist. In German literature of the modern age this situation is vividly reflected. Naturally, the Youth Movement of 1910 identified itself with this outlook. While the classical educational novel guided the reader in terms of "Werde der du bist", the youth novels of modern literature pose the blunt and sceptical question: Who am I? What am I? By and large, there prevails an atmosphere of helplessness and isolation. Countless are the protests against the "Schema F" (red tape of routine) of bureaucracy, the revolts against the school and its bogey of "Bildung", against the big city, the police, the state, against any form of blind authority; countless the pleas for understanding and the agonies of failure, which characterize the works of numerous authors, from WEDEKIND, SCHNITZLER, HEINRICH MANN, FR. HUCH, RAINER MARIA RILKE to HERMANN HESSE, JACOB WASSERMANN, FRANK THIESS, FRANZ WERFEL, ERNST GLAESER and many others. A striking exception to this rule of disillusionment is THOMAS MANN'S *Zauberberg*, one of the last attempts at a synthesis in the classical sense and a late survival of the credo of submission of the individual to the common cause. By temperament and outlook the innumerable war novels (REMARQUE, RENN, ARNOLD ZWEIG, FR. V. UNRUH, CAROSSA, WEHNER etc.) also belong in this group of disillusioned youth. Now that the failure to be absorbed into the whole of society can no longer be attributed to personal shortcomings or personal guilt, as in the tragedies of the 19th century, the responsibility for this failure is placed on the older generation, as in WERFEL'S novel, *Nicht der Mörder, der Ermordete ist schuldig* (Not the Murderer, but the Victim is guilty). Thus the tenor of this trend is that of frustration, if not indeed of despair; and the lack of positive ideals is overlaid by the grim determination to accept whatever fate has in store. Needless to say, such sentiment is frequently accompanied by the stylistic features of "expressionism".

2. A similar expressionistic tendency can be observed in those literary

products which pursue psychological analysis. Here again, the literary influence of NIETZSCHE becomes apparent. In his own works, which are characterized by restless and incisive aphorisms, he reveals himself as a ruthless master of self-observation. If formerly literature considered the world as a touchstone for genius, the psychological approach no longer permits any such delusions of grandeur. Where they do appear they are unmasked as compensations for weakness and insecurity. And if aesthetic idealism proclaimed positive values as the aims of the educational process, modern scepticism has reduced them to the plane of diverted or sublimated instincts. Similar perspectives were gained from the works of Dostoyevsky, Ibsen, and Strindberg. But neither they nor Nietzsche, to whom the discovery of the subconscious is to be credited, advocated the return to the primitive. To be sure, they interpreted traditional values and social institutions as human attempts to conquer fear and to escape the uncertainty of the future. Yet they were not intent upon humiliating man but rather upon freeing him, by exposing the nature of his fears. Thus literature has, in the end, relinquished the lofty ambition of inquiring into the "Wesen" of things and has resigned itself to the function of a healing art. Freudian psychoanalysis, soon adopted by literature, had similar therapeutic tendencies, even though it reduced the ideal of "Geist" to a product of suppressed and sublimated desires. But precisely where literature is designed to unmask ideals and desires, romanticism makes its appearance in the poetry of hallucinations and dreams, in the escape from fear, or in the immersion in ancient and oriental myths. In this connection, the works of KAFKA and HESSE are representative; and if the life of ARTHUR SCHNITZLER was devoted to the analysis of human passions, his writings began, most significantly, with *Der Weg ins Freie* (The Road into the Open) and ended with *Die Flucht in die Finsternis* (The Flight into Darkness).

The scrutiny of modern German literature in all its bewildering and diffuse tendencies admits of one general conclusion: most writers agree that a universal crisis has befallen the world. It is remarkable how lyric poetry of the late 1920's reveals an air of absolute hopelessness. Prophetic warnings are sounded: The end of the world is at hand. Man has lost his ultimate purpose. A curse is hurled at the modern metropolis and its mechanized existence, for it is restless, godless, and doomed. The visionary ecstasies of modern expressionists, derived from experiences during World War I, grope in vain for some positive goal. In itself such a sentiment is nothing new. It has been voiced in previous ages, and yet the world has survived and produced new modes of living and new works of lasting value. As to German literature of the immediate past, the basic inclination toward solemnity still remains its most characteristic feature, as it has through the ages. Even the social and the psychological perspectives which advocated stark realism have been unable to emancipate themselves completely from metaphysical constructions. The writings of NIETZSCHE, LANGBEHN, SPENGLER and similar prophets, and the seriousness with which

they were received indicate to what extent the "outlooks into the age" were dependent upon the literary heritage of German classicism. To regain a unifying purpose of existence in which the mere function of "being" is subordinated to that of "action", the old idealistic concepts of "Geist", "Ganzheit" were invoked. Repeatedly the slogan of a new "mythus" was voiced, of a "style" or "Weltanschauung", that is appropriate for and representative of the age, just as former centuries were expressed by their styles or "myths". Again the under-current of an aesthetic, artistic way of thinking should be noticed which placed — as in the writings of the romanticists and of HERDER — the "mythus" in the past or in the future, as a challenge and an unattainable goal. But it was a misnomer and a betrayal when, in 1930, the book of ROSENBERG, *Der Mythus des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts*, pretended that such a unifying viewpoint had been attained in Nazism. Necessarily, it had to result in a patchwork of disorganized findings and thoughts, held together by the limited political purposes of the Nazi group.

#### IV. Literature under the Political Yoke.

Literature, as we have seen, is the medium through which the German people have been accustomed to receive and preserve their ideologies. With this in mind one can realize that the Nazis have left no means unused to seize control over literature, be it in order to silence ideological opponents, or to display pretended cultural ambitions, or to employ an effective weapon of propaganda. Literary life in Nazi Germany has by no means been dead. The Nazis themselves have too well anticipated the charges that would be raised against a country with controlled public opinion and, therefore, went quite out of their way to prove that creative writing was still flourishing under its own "voluntary restraint". Hence the theater has received particular attention in order to demonstrate that the older classics as well as the moderns enjoy equal popularity. Theatrical events of nation-wide scope, such as the festival plays at Frankfurt, Heidelberg, or Bayreuth have continued with the same fanfare and showmanship that is usually displayed at political occasions. Besides, the theater is a welcome opiate in strenuous times. But not until one observes that such plays as LESSING's *Nathan der Weise* or SCHILLER's *Don Carlos* or KAISER's *Gas* or TOLLER's *Maschinenstürmer* are not being given — or only with subtle changes — does the general public become aware of definitely restrictive policies in matters of literature. Goebbels himself is a student of literature (— he wrote his doctoral dissertation on *Wilhelm von Schütz als Dramatiker* —) so that, by interest and training, he is fully familiar with its nature, appeal, effect, and potential energies in political life. Indeed, many of the most successful Nazi slogans have, directly or indirectly, been appropriated from the realm of literature.

The interference of the Nazi administration with literary life in Germany has been twofold, prohibitive and "encouraging". The prohibitive measures were blunt and brutal and obviously directed by no



principles other than racial or political. The exiling of opposing authors and the ban on books were effected with draconic efficiency soon after the "Machtübernahme". The lists of books decreed to be removed from libraries or banned from circulation show no consistency; and more than once have authors, who had been supporters or even mouthpieces of the political regime, been barred from the shelves of book-stores, whenever they incurred disfavor for political reasons. It is one thing to pronounce ambitious programs for cultural activities; it is another to administer them on the basis of political expediency.

It is difficult to determine the principles according to which literature is authorized and "encouraged". There exists the *Reichsstelle zur Förderung des deutschen Schrifttums*, a supervising agency organized under the propaganda ministry for administrative reasons; at the same time it is supervised by the cultural office of the Nazi party for purposes of ideological censorship. Writers are no longer masters of their own time or pens; they must become members of the *Reichskulturkammer* if they expect to appear in print. Literary prizes exist in many forms, in order to demonstrate the official interest in the cultivation of the arts; for the awards a party official is often attached to the committee of literary jurors.

More revealing as to dominating ideologies is the choice of authors recommended in various ways. Outside the traditional classics, eagerly claimed as spiritual forerunners, such poets are especially sponsored as express the charm of simple, happy, unproblematic existence (as MATTHIAS CLAUDIUS) or the splendor of native folklore and traditions (as GUSTAV FREYTAG and W. H. RIEHL), the heroism of national history (ARNDT, PAUL ERNST) or the sentimental attachment to the native scene (EICHENDORFF, STORM). In regard to choice of topics, particular emphasis is placed on the world of the saga, the era of the Germanic Migrations, the Thirty Years' War, the age of Frederick the Second, the Napoleonic Wars and similar themes. They offer an opportunity to dwell upon the cult of the past, on the continuity of racial traditions, on the worship of native "blood and soil", as well as on the ideal of "Gemeinschaft", the sentimental value of folk and comradeship. For obvious reasons the literature of Germans abroad ("Auslandsdeutschtum") receives particular attention. In contrast to the disillusionment displayed in the earlier youth novels, the self-confidence of youth is appealed to in a manner which is frequently quite direct and unsophisticated. Since the current philosophy frowns upon the presentation of such features of life as might lead to "defeatism", any psychological analysis of social or political trends is outlawed unless it permits an ultimately hopeful vision of human existence. That is the reason why such eminent writers as HERMANN STEHR, JOSEF PONTEN, ERWIN KOLBENHEYER, HANS GRIMM have enjoyed continued popularity. In their attempts to see the "essential" (das Wesentliche) of the German character in the mystic, unwavering searching of the past, they represent an outlet and an escape for many readers who find it impossible to associate themselves with the political current. The same is true of such

writers as HANS CAROSSA and ERNST WIECHERT who have withdrawn, in their writings, to the interpretation of the inward existence of man, to such a degree that their metaphysical wanderings, their delicate sensitiveness, their profoundly allegorical or symbolistic themes are likely to be understood by a small circle of readers only. But to them they must appear as the genuine representatives of the dignity of the individual in the traditional sense, writers who insist on the nobility of "Geist" instead of "blood and soil". More than any other poets they have adopted the task of the physician (the profession that Carossa fulfils in life) for the many readers who are suffering from existence. Sometimes, Carossa and Wiechert may even be taking issue with the political reality, but only in allegorical form, so that their warnings and pronouncements are understood by only a few, and by these only as faint but regular signals, — muffled, subterranean. For the writers who have been swept to the fore by the waves of Nazism nothing is more characteristic than the obsession for tragedy and the renaissance of medieval themes. The grandiloquent praise of the "Reich", of its "Gaue" and "Marken", of the "Gemeinschaft" which is always "on the march" is reminiscent of the feudal times of Barbarossa, world imperialism, and crusades. Knights-errant like Don Quixote, these writers strike against the spectres they have conjured, with their feeling of insecurity and their fear of present and future transformed into a heroic pose. The intensity of personal experience has been replaced by patriotic clichés, above all by the empty awe for the tragic as it is inspired by the musical dramas of WAGNER. And it may be recalled that once these writers were officially exhorted that for them the myth of the Nibelungs should assume allegorical significance, not with Siegfried as their ideal type, but with Hagen, the sinister representative of guilty fealty, fidelity unto destruction. Meanwhile, the many German writers on foreign soil, who carry on the old traditions and cast for new possibilities, continue in the difficult task to keep the world aware of the contributions of German literature.



## BOOK REVIEWS

**Blitz German,**

Rudolf Brandl, Harrisburg, Pa. Military Service Publishing Co., 1943, pp. 173, price \$0.75.

The subtitle *A Language Guide for Invasion and Occupation* formulates the avowed purpose of this recent addition to the books in and on military German. In its foreword, the author emphasizes that he is not trying to "display technical scholarship" but to "produce something practical and suited for immediate use". "Blitz German" — in the author's words — "is not intended for the technical scholar, but for the great body of men in our Armed Forces who need to know enough German to cope with the emergencies that are likely to arise during the coming invasion and occupation, but who do not need and do not want any elaborate equipment of comparative philology."

In a somewhat unusual endeavor to nip any untoward criticism in the bud the author states that he hopes "to placate his fellow philologists so that they will refrain from raising reproachful index-fingers upon discovering oversimplifications and other deviations from the path of textbook virtuosity." Admitting without hesitation that a book may justly expect to be evaluated according to the purpose for which it is written and affirming that the purpose of this volume is fully commendable and timely, this review will limit itself to ascertaining how closely such purpose has been achieved.

The subject-matter is about evenly distributed among three parts: classified vocabularies, phrases, and alphabetical word lists.

The *Classified Vocabularies* comprise sections entitled *Military Terminology*; *Aviation Nomenclature*; *Nautical Terms*; *Time and Weather*; *Geography, Topography, Orientation*; *Titles, Trades, Professions*; *Raw Materials, Tools, Utensils*; *Numerals*; *Colors*; *Sizes, Quantities, Comparatives, Shapes*; *Animals*; *Trees, Shrubs, Grains, Flowers*; *Parts of the Body, Illness, Wounds*; *Family*. Most of these chapters, but by no means all, are arranged alphabetically and may boast of being reasonably complete in their scope.

Part II, *Phrases*, consists of chapters

headed *Exclamations and Phrases for Emergencies*; *Forms of Address, Idioms*; *Handling Suspects and Hostile Civilians*; *Dealing with Friendly Inhabitants*; *Questions regarding Enemy Forces*; *Questions about Air-borne Troops*; *Reconnaissance*; *Billeting*; *Requisitioning*; *Prisoners*; *Deserters*; *Chemical Warfare*; *Armored Forces*; *Medical Aid and Dental Care*; *Postal Service, Telephone, Telegraph*; *Hotels, Restaurants, Recreation*; *Shopping and Personal Services*. The speech sequences given in this section — easily the best part of the manual — are completely adapted to military exigencies. Contrary to many previous language Baedekers, the German equivalents are admirably idiomatic. Witness expressions such as *Haut schleunigst ab* (beat it!); *Na, wenn schon* (So what.); *Das können Sie Ihrer Großmutter erzählen* (Tell it to the Marines); *Unsre Leute brennen Euch gleich eins auf den Pelz* (Our men are quick at the trigger).

The most useful part of the appendices is a German-English word list comprising over 3000 words of a military or technical nature. A brief English-German general list, comparative data on weights, measures, money, temperature scales and geographical districts round out the information given.

The following omissions and inaccuracies are noted:

a) *Abbreviations*: No explanatory list is given, although they are used copiously in assigning words in the vocabulary to certain categories.

b) *Punctuation*: In 14 cases, the comma is omitted where it is required to separate clauses or modified infinitives. Delete the comma in *Antitank, weapon* (p. 4) and *Zeit, aufzubrechen* (26). A hyphen is missing in *aus stellen* (66) and before *nummern* (69).

c) *Mistranslations and Peculiarities*: There is no difference between *Luftschraube* and *Propeller* (20); a *bomber* is not a *Kampfflugzeug* (19, 138); a *Tischler* is commonly referred to as a *cabinet maker*, not *joiner* (36). *Kerosene* given as *Kerosin* (39) should be rendered as *Petroleum*; one wonders about the importance of differentiating between a *cat* and a *tib-cat* (45); *rye*, given as *Korn*

(48) would be rendered more accurately as *Roggen*; if parent is *Elternteil* (52), how is the novice to form the plural? *mir* must be added to *ich mache . . . nicht viel daraus* (57). *Antreten* is not to jump off (121), and *Flak* (130) is primarily the anti-aircraft gun.

d) *Gender*: Wrongly given for masculine nouns *Heeresintendant* f (137), *Küstenmörser* n (143); for feminine nouns *Aufgabe* m (121), *Sichtnavigation* n (160); for neuter noun *Bullauge* f (22). Given doubly for *Fette* (85), *Futtermittel* (85); not given at all for *Dezember* (24), *Wäscherin* (37), *Hängematte* (111), *Zitrone* (112), *Gasumbang* (132), *Kommiß* (140), *Landelicht* (144), *Maschinenpistole* (146).

e) *Typography*: Misprints: *Ullstem* (Author's Biography), *Matrosenobergefreierer* (3), *gerährdendes* (17), *sichs'* (80), *Zehlen* (102), *Gispritzten* (102), *Vögel* (108), *Steigggeschwindigkeit* (162), *über-rumpeln* (167), *thuringisch* (last appendix). Use capital letter in *stelle* (42), *hause* (66); small letter in *Wollen* (101), *Brauchen* (102), *Bachelor* (107), *Schreiben* (119). Lack of indentation: *einen, without* (82), *Not-feuer* (150). Wrong division: *nächsten* (78). Wrong spacing: *gar'nichts* (60, 95), *Richtungs-und* (81), *sehr'gut* (84), *Wo'werden* (104). Syncope: *irgend einen* (63), *irgend etwas* (70), *irgend eine* (91).

f) *Arrangement*: In those sections where presentation is based on alphabetical order, no fewer than 65 entries are found in wrong places which tends to impair the efficiency of the volume. The apparent principle of listing verbs before other parts of speech is not carried through consistently.

In a chapter entitled "Suggestions for Use" it is intimated that the book might be used by advanced students of German and beginners alike, a contention that cannot possibly be substantiated. No grammar is included beyond giving the gender of nouns and the rule that the article has to agree with it; the pronunciation rules are limited to a key of 13 lines, indication of vowel length by italic type, and marking of stress. In this system of self-imposed terseness there are such approximations as "pronounce *ö* nearly like *u* in *fur*" or "*ü* nearly like *ie* in *field*, but with less of the long *ee* sound". With such meager information it is not readily conceivable how a beginner, even a language genius, could have a chance of being understood by a native German.

At best, the manual may lay claim to being a handy reference book for the student who has had some training in the language; in the hands of an untutored beginner it could only have the effect of discouraging him completely.

Adelphi College. —Siegfried H. Muller

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